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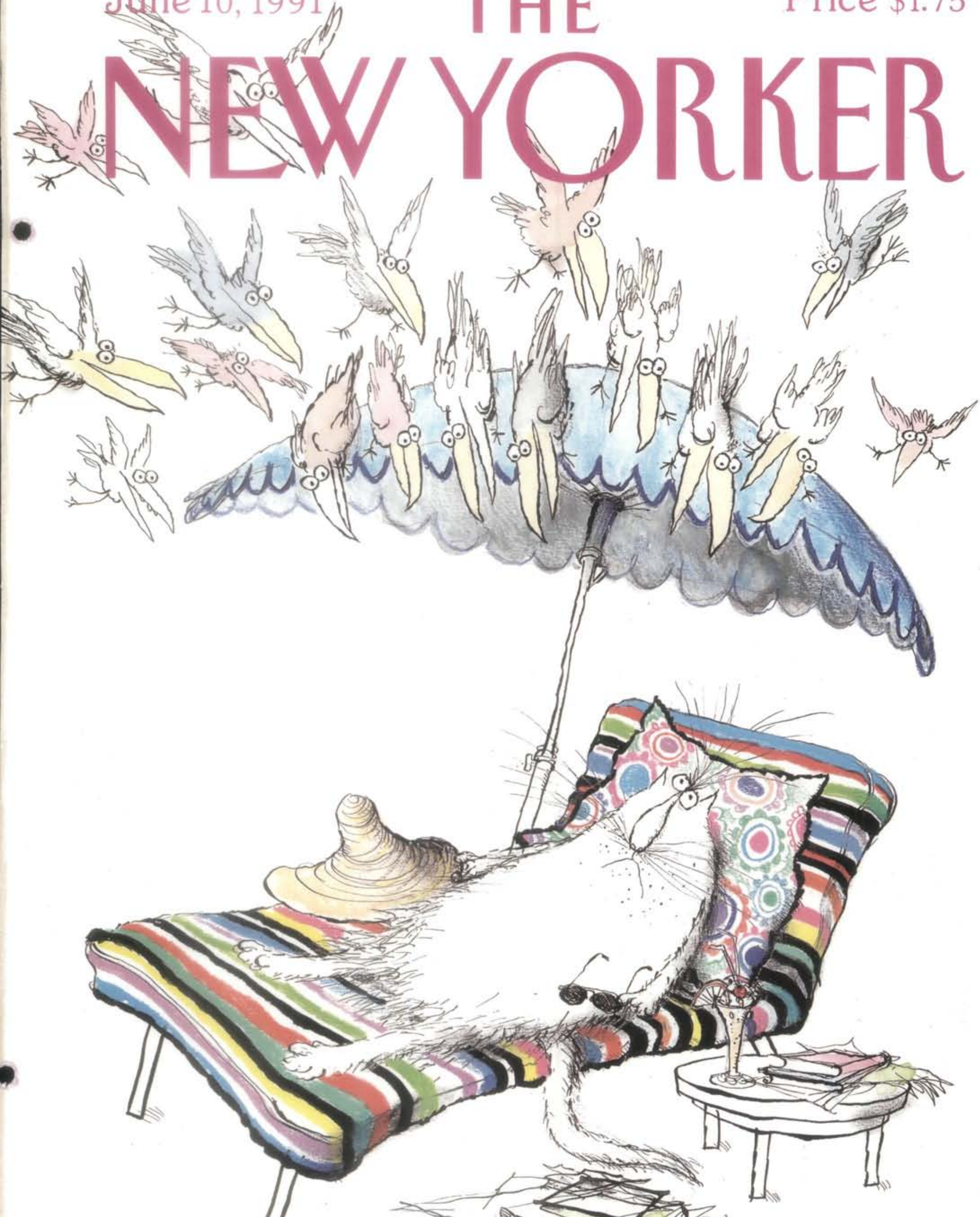

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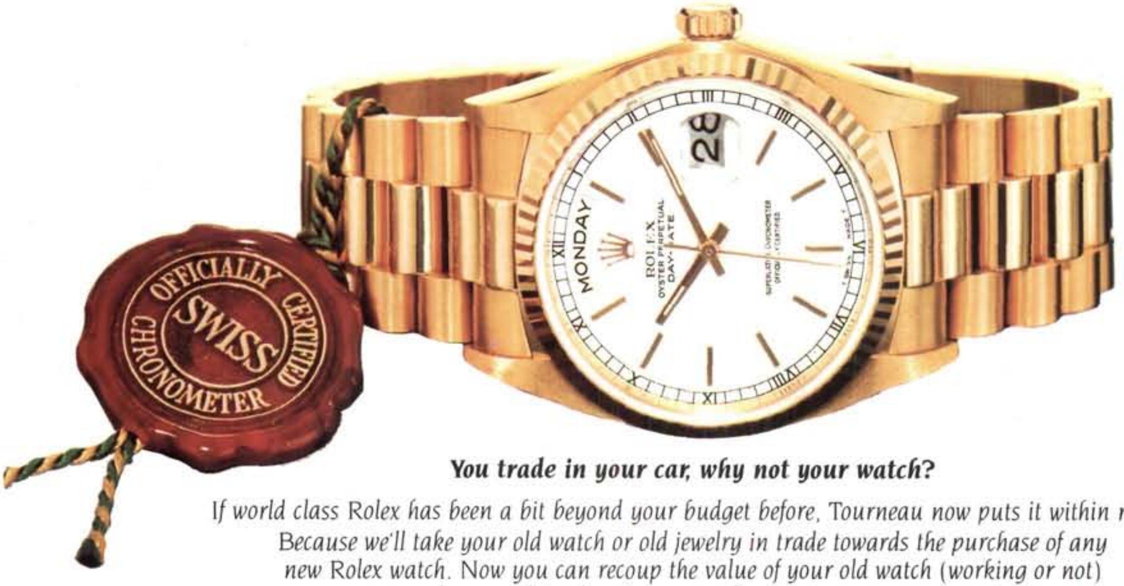

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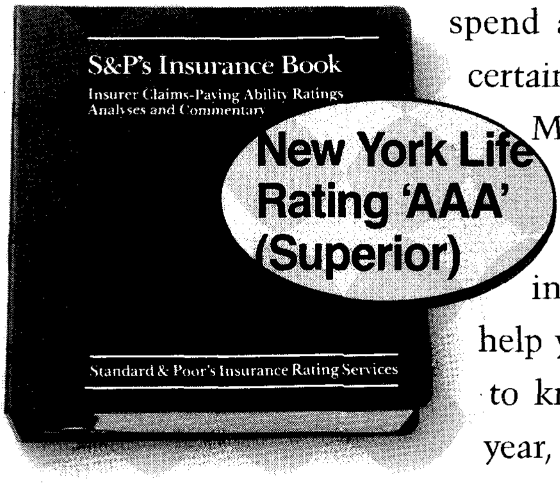
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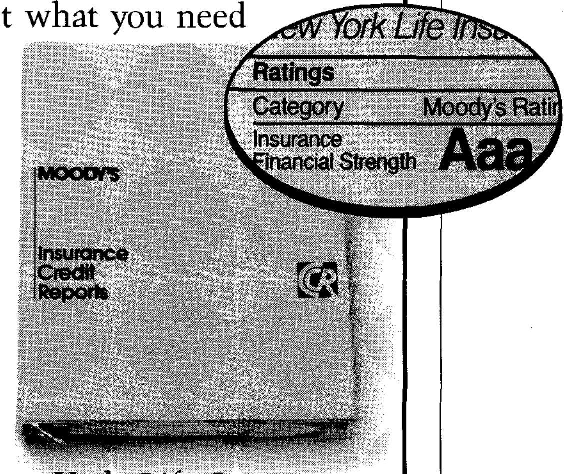
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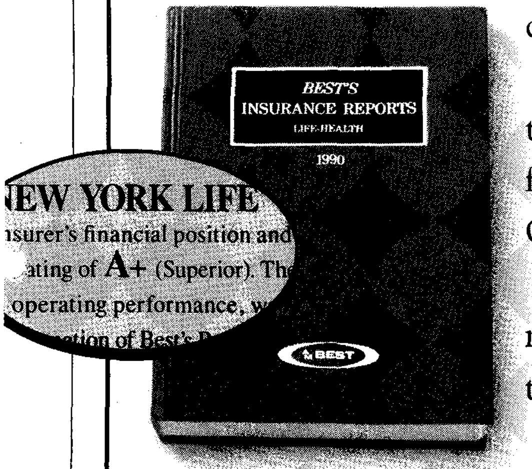
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

JUNE 10, 1991

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN 4
THE TALK OF THE TOWN 31
"CARBOHYDRATES" . . . . *Polly Frost* 36
"SECOND QUESTION" . . . . *Ann Beattie* 38
"ALL BEARS" (POEM) . . . . *Caroline Fraser* 40
A REPORTER AT LARGE (CHINATOWN—PART I) . . . . *Gwen Kinkead* 45
"BLACK DIAMOND" (POEM) . . . . *Pierre Martory* 46
"THEIR HOUSE" (POEM) . . . . *Elaine Terranova* 76
IN FASHION . . . . *Holly Brubach* 84
THE SKY LINE . . . . *Brendan Gill* 97
BOOKS . . . . *Helen Vendler* 103
BRIEFLY NOTED 111

COVER: *Ronald Searle*

DRAWINGS: *Arnie Levin, Gahan Wilson, Donald Reilly, James Stevenson, Danny Shanahan, Dean Vietor, Edward Koren, Michael Maslin, J. B. Handelsman, Jack Ziegler, Thomas B. Allen, Victoria Roberts, Mick Stevens, Sidney Harris, Leo Cullum, Glen Baxter, Charles Barsotti, William Hamilton, Roz Chast, Kenneth Mahood*

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THE NEW YORKER (ISSN 0028-792X), published weekly by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., 20 W. 43rd St., N.Y., N.Y. 10036; Steven T. Florio, president and chief executive officer; Ruth A. Diem, vice-president and human resources director; Frank Mustacato, vice-president and circulation director; Virginia L. Jespersen, vice-president and general manager/cfo; Lynn Guthrie Heiler, vice-president and associate publisher; Matthew D. Roberts, vice-president and marketing director; Pamela H. Older, vice-president and director of manufacturing; Martha Kaplan, vice-president. Branch advertising offices: 111 East Wacker Drive, Chicago, Ill. 60601; 41 Osgood Place, San Francisco, Calif. 94133; Suite 1460, 5900 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90036; 67½ Chestnut St., Boston, Mass. 02108; 19 South Audley St., London, W1Y 5DN. Metropolitan Publishers Representatives: 3017 Piedmont Road, NE, Atlanta, Ga. 30305; 2500 So. Dixie Highway, Miami, Fla. 33133; 3016 Mason Place, Tampa, Fla. 33629; 3 Church St., Suite 503, Toronto, Canada. M5E 1M2. Carol Orr & Co., Publishers Representative: 3300 Oak Lawn, Suite 500, Dallas, Tx. 75219. Vol. LXVII, No. 16, June 10, 1991. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, Canada, and for payment of postage in cash. Canadian goods and services tax registration number R123242885. © 1991 by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., in the United States and Canada. All rights reserved. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the consent of The New Yorker. The magazine's name, logo, and various titles and headings herein have been registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Printed in U.S.A. Subscription rates: In U.S. and possessions, one year, $32.00; two years, $52.00. In Canada, one year, $56.00. Other foreign, one year, $66.00, payable in advance. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The New Yorker, Box 56447, Boulder, Colorado 80322.

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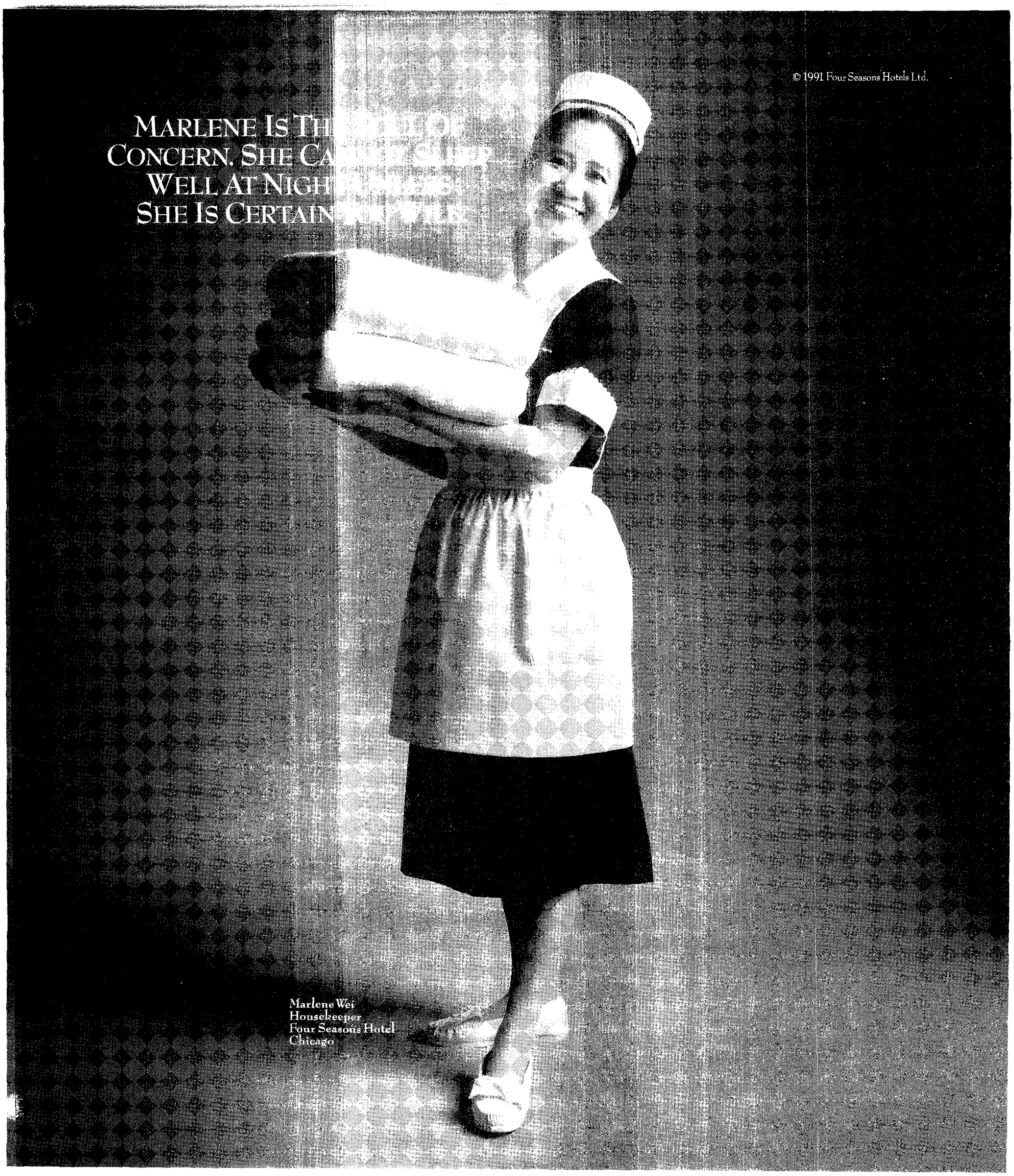
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

OUR dictionary has three entries under the word "goat," one of them neutral ("a hollow-horned ruminant mammal") and the others pejorative ("a licentious man: lecher" and "scapegoat"). The animal's got an equally mixed rap in the world of show biz. Rock bands use it for pagan ritual ("Goat's Head Soup"), and movies slight the animal in favor of its cud-chawing cousins ("The Sheep Has Five Legs," "The Cow and I"). Only outside the Great White Way does the goat seem to count for something. For example, there was "Hogan's Goat," the launching pad for Faye Dunaway's career, and, right now, there's "The Goat," a "reflective comedy" by Ben Morse, at the Perry Street. Most notable, however, is the inadvertent scene-stealer of the Ridiculous Theatrical Company's current production of "The Hunchback of Notre Dame."

The Ridiculous goat, Djali, isn't real—only Broadway, it seems, can afford live-animal acts these days—but you'd never know that from the creature's behavior onstage. It's barely two feet high, and made of foam and mangy fur, but it does everything (*everything*) except a soft-shoe and a shuffle between acts. In its original incarnation, Djali wasn't quite as intrepid. The casters that its designer, Jeffrey Rebelo, had put under its hooves had to be fiddled with during previews: the Ridiculous stage is uneven, and anything not nailed down tends to roll. As an additional aid to balance and versatility, Rebelo gave one of Djali's legs hinges; this tinkering allows the animal to kick more freely. But according to Steve Asher, the company's managing director, the most important adjustment occurred before the show's third preview. "I noticed that Jeffrey was putting eyeliner and rouge on the animal's face, and when I asked him why, he replied, 'Goats need theatrical makeup, too.' " We didn't ask Asher what brand of greasepaint his colleague uses, but, whatever it is, it's remarkably smudgeproof. When, in the haste of final flight, the ruminant falls off a boat into the Seine and emerges from the drink thanks to a life-preserver-wielding piano player (Mark Bennett, the show's composer), every bit of pancake is intact. Esther Williams had nothing on Djali.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

Bergman on Stage—*The Royal Dramatic* Theatre of Sweden presents Strindberg's **MISS JULIE,** the first in a series of three works directed by Ingmar Bergman. Lena Olin and Peter Stormare head the cast. The play (performed in Swedish, with simultaneous English translation) opens June 10 at 7, and continues through June 12. (BAM's Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St., east of Flatbush Ave. 1-718 636-4100.) (*)

Club Soda—A comedy by Leah Kornfeld Friedman, directed by Pamela Berlin. With Dan Futterman, Aaron Harnick, Katherine Hiler, Patricia Mauceri, Alanna Ubach, Lenny Venito, and Danny Zorn. Previews begin June 6. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

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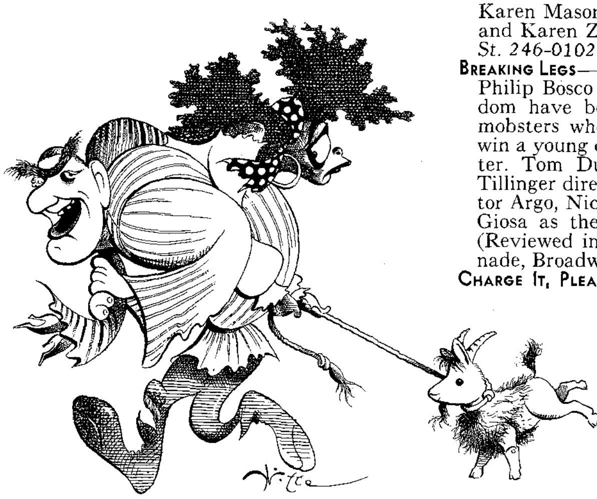

Hapi Phace, Cheryl Reeves, and Djali in "The Hunchback of Notre Dame"

Getting Married—A production of Shaw's comedy, with Victoria Tennant, Lee Richardson, Linda Thorson, Nicolas Coster, and others. Directed by Stephen Porter. Previews begin June 7. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

Lips Together, Teeth Apart—Christine Baranski, Anthony Heald, Swoosie Kurtz, and Nathan Lane in a new play by Terrence McNally. John Tillinger directed. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

Mr. Gogol and Mr. Preen—A new comedy by Elaine May, with Zohra Lampert, William H. Macy, and Mike Nussbaum. Directed by Gregory Mosher. Previews June 4-8. Opens June 9 at 6:30. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Nova Velha Estoria—A work performed by the Brazilian troupe Grupo de Teatro Macunaima. Opens June 8 at 8, and runs through June 23. (Repertorio Español, Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850.) (*)

Prom Queens Unchained—A musical by Larry Goodsight (lyrics), Keith Herrmann (score), and Stephen Witkin (book). Previews begin June 7. (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

Selling Off—Dody Goodman and Andrew Bloch star in a play by Harris W. Freedman. In previews. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)

Sky Woman Falling—A play by Toby Armour. Opens June 6 at 8, and runs through June 23. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 254-1109.)

The Subject Was Roses—John Mahoney, Dana Ivey, and Patrick Dempsey in a revival of the 1964 play by Frank D. Gilroy. Directed by Jack Hofsiss. Previews June 4 at 8 and June 5 at 2. Opens June 5 at 8. (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883.)

The New York International Festival of the Arts is taking place all over the city from June 8 through June 23. For recorded information about performances, call 768-1818; for tickets and reservations, call the individual box offices. Festival events are indicated by an asterisk.

Troubadour—Christopher Howatt plays St. Francis of Assisi in a musical by Bert Draesel and John Martin. Opens June 4 at 8. (Ubu Theatre, 15 W. 28th St. 673-3748.)

NEW THIS SEASON

And the World Goes 'Round: The Songs of Kander & Ebb—A musical revue, with Bob Cuccioli, Karen Mason, Brenda Pressley, Jim Walton, and Karen Ziëmba. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 246-0102.)

Breaking Legs—The Mafia meets Off Broadway. Philip Bosco and Vincent Gardenia can seldom have been funnier than as a pair of mobsters who back a new play in order to win a young dramatist for Gardenia's daughter. Tom Dulack wrote the comedy; John Tillinger directed it. With Larry Storch, Victor Argo, Nicolas Surovy, and, above all, Sue Giosa as the daughter who spins the plot. (Reviewed in our issue of 6/3/91.) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

Charge It, Please—A comedy, with music, by Carlos Gorbea. Three performances a week are in English; four are in Spanish. (Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 354-1293. Closes June 23.)

Daugherty & Field Off Broadway—The cabaret team of Bill Daugherty and Robin Field holds forth in a revue of swing and show tunes. (Double Image Theatre, 15 Vandam St. 924-1120. Closes June 8.)

Ensemble Studio Theatre—Presenting the 1991 festival of one-act plays. Series B, through June 9: "Practice," by Leslie Ayvazian; "Face Divided," by Edward Allan Baker; "Rapid Eye Movement," by Susan Kim; "Over Texas," a short opera by Michael John La Chiusa; and "Can Can," by Romulus Linney. (549 W. 52nd St. 247-3405. The festival continues through June 23.)

Fiddler on the Roof—The Israeli actor Topol makes a commanding Tevye—the best of all of them—in this production, which falls somewhere between revival and facsimile. The songs are by Bock and Harnick; the dances and staging are re-created from the Jerome Robbins originals; and the costumes are from the Patricia Zipprodt originals. (12/3/90) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510. Closes June 16.)

Food and Shelter—A young man, his wife, and their little girl, suddenly homeless, decide to hide out in Disneyland. The husband leaves to search for work, and wife and child spend the next few months living in their car and going from place to place in Los Angeles. The play, by Jane Anderson, has its ups and downs, but the performances are good, especially that of Kelly Coffield as the wife. André Ernotte directed. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874.)

Fridays—A 1981 play by Andrew Johns, with Henderson Forsythe and John Peakes. Presented by the Riverside Shakespeare Company. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000. Closes June 23.)

The Goat—A comedy by Ben Morse, set in Brooklyn. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 255-7190. Closes June 9.)

The Good Times Are Killing Me—The cartoonist Lynda Barry devised this memory play of words and pop tunes about a racially mixed neighborhood. At the heart of it is the friendship of two little girls, one white, the other black, who are delightfully portrayed by Angela Goethals and Chandra Wilson. The undercurrent of serious comment on race doesn't add much, but every humorous scene scores a bull's-eye. Also with Kim Staunton, Wendell Pierce, and Holly Felton. Mark Brokaw directed. (5/6/91) (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103. Closes June 23.)

Gypsy—The Tyne Daly-led revival of the great Laurents-Styne-Sondheim musical has returned to Broadway for a limited engagement. It is so delightful—and the cast so engaging—that we think anyone would be the happier for having seen it. One suggestion: don't applaud when Mama Rose comes down the aisle (you'll drown out the first number). (12/4/89) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

The Haunted Host and **Safe Sex**—A double bill consisting of a 1964 comedy by Robert Pat-

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THE THEATRE–Cont'd

rick and a revised 1987 comedy by Harvey Fierstein. Mr. Fierstein and Jason Workman make up the cast of both plays. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

The Hunchback of Notre Dame—Everett Quinton's new show, which is billed as "a quasimusical." (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Square. 691-2271.)

I Hate Hamlet—In Paul Rudnick's jokey farce, Nicol Williamson gives a stunning comedy performance as the ghost of John Barrymore, summoned to aid a young Hollywood actor who has been booked to play Hamlet in the Park. Mr. Williamson is ably supported by some of the other actors, but the show boils down to a marvellous solo turn. (4/22/91) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 582-4022.)

Jackie Mason: Brand New—The comedian brings his one-man show to Broadway again. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

Lost in Yonkers—There's not one glimmer of honesty or authenticity in this family melodrama by Neil Simon. Set in Yonkers during the Second World War, it's about what happens when a cowering, pathetic man has to leave his two adolescent sons with his intimidating mother for the better part of a year. (3/11/91) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)

Lusting After Pipino's Wife—A comedy by Sam Henry Kass. (45th Street Theatre, 354 W. 45th St. 564-8038.)

Mambo Mouth—John Leguizamo portrays seven Hispanic characters in a one-man show, which was seen this spring at the American Place Theatre. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

Miss Saigon—Oh, the horror! The horror! (4/29/91) (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.)

Once on This Island—A musical by Lynn Ahrens (book and lyrics) and Stephen Flaherty (score), which is based on Rosa Guy's 1985 novel, "My Love, My Love." (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Only the Truth Is Funny—The comedian Rick Reynolds' one-man show. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 246-0102.)

Our Country's Good—A play by Timberlake Wertenbaker about a group of convicts in Botany Bay rehearsing a production of George Farquhar's "The Recruiting Officer" in 1789. Mark Lamos's production is marred by truly terrible acting, across the board, from a cast led by Peter Frechette. The play tries hard to identify itself as Serious Theatre, but never gets much beyond the initial irony inherent in the idea of society's outcasts performing a play written for and about high society. (5/20/91) (Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 307-4100.)

Pageant—A musical spoof of beauty contests. Book and lyrics by Bill Russell and Frank Kelly and music by Albert Evans. Conceived and directed by Robert Longbottom. (Blue Angel, 321 W. 44th St. 262-3333.)

Penn & Teller's Refrigerator Tour—The heavenly twain meet again. The new tricks are just as mysterious (and frightening) as the old ones. As for the tricksters, their bogus candor is intact, and they've never been funnier. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220.)

The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui—John Turturro stars in a production of Brecht's play. (CSC, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210. Closes June 9.)

A Room of One's Own—Eileen Atkins is sublime in this stage adaptation of the Virginia Woolf essay. Easily the most civilized entertainment on offer, this one-woman show is something every lively-minded young woman above the age of fifteen—fourteen if she's particularly lively-minded—will want to see. (3/18/91) (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. Closes June 9.)

Satan Never Sleeps—A play, with music, by Ronald Wyche and Weldon. (Billie Holiday, 1368 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-0918.)

The Secret Garden—This lovely musical adaptation of the classic children's story by Frances Hodgson Burnett isn't just a kiddie show. Subtle, charming, intelligent, and wholly literary in its approach to adaptation, it manages both to be faithful to the spirit of the book and to comment on the particular moment in time that produced it. (5/13/91) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 246-0102.)

Song of Singapore—A musical, by Erik Frandsen, Michael Garin, Robert Hipkens, Paula Lockheart, and Allan Katz, that is set in a Singapore night club in 1941. (17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. 228-0844.)

The Substance of Fire—Ron Rifkin gives an impeccable performance as a publisher—a refugee from Nazi Germany—whose difficulties with his grown children are no greater than those with himself. The play, by Jon Robin Baitz, is not flawless, but it is consistently absorbing and very well acted, under the direction of Daniel Sullivan. With Sarah Jessica Parker, Patrick Breen, Jon Tenney, and Maria Tucci. (4/1/91) (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

The Summer Winds—A new play by Frank Pugliese, with Ashley Crow, Lisa Eichhorn, Timothy Britten Parker, and others. (Naked Angels, 114 W. 17th St. 727-0020. Closes June 15.)

The Sum of Us—David Stevens' poignant comedy about how hard it is for parents and children to break free of each other (particularly if they get on too well) is set in present-day Australia. Depending on how you look at it, the play is either very dear and rather flawed or rather dear and very flawed. (11/5/90) (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

The Will Rogers Follies—The sets by Tony Walton, the direction and choreography by Tommy Tune, the costumes by Willa Kim, and the row upon row of Ziegfeld girls make a feast for the eyes, but the funny bone and heart are neglected. Keith Carradine makes an engaging, amusing Rogers, but that is not enough, despite Cy Coleman's pleasant score. (5/13/91) (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.)

Yokohama Duty—A new play by Quincy Long. (SoHo Rep, 46 Walker St. 869-3530. Closes June 9.)

LONG RUNS

CATS: Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **CITY OF ANGELS:** Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run turned thirty-one last month. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1991:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Stuart Ross's loving tongue-in-check salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.) . . . **GRAND HOTEL:** The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show, but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-0102.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY:** Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York corporate raider's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION:** You're best off knowing nothing about the John Guare play other than that it represents a perfect meeting of the playwright, director Jerry Zaks, and actress Stockard Channing. Out of a true story—one apparently about celebrity and Good Samaritanism—Guare has fashioned a wistful comedy about race, class, money, imagination, collective conscience, individual psyche, and the impulse toward art. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.) . . . **SMOKE ON THE MOUNTAIN:** This loving satire of old-time gospel music, set in 1938, is perfectly delightful. Written by Connie Ray, it recreates a Saturday-night service at a small church in rural North Carolina, where a family of gospel singers have been invited to appear. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

DANCE

SO you're dead, O.K.? You've been under the earth about twenty-four hours, and it's been getting close down there—especially for you, to whom dancing was second nature. Wait, you're being hauled up into the moonlight and damp forest air. You've got to get used to walking again. It's a mechanical thing: Step. Stop. Step. Stop. Now, here's how you're going to bring yourself back to something like life. Stand on one leg and point the other behind you in arabesque. Now hop in place, turning on one spot like a weathervane in a gale. Hop as fast as you can without losing your focus and while making the arabesques as big and high as possible. Faster, faster—presto! You're whirling free.

One hundred and fifty years ago this month, a girl named Giselle first rose from her grave in this haunted wood before an audience at the Théâtre de l'Académie Royale de Musique. Since then, the ballet that bears her name has enjoyed—and endured—many stagings, by diverse hands, and has accumulated many details that its original choreographers, Jules Perrot and Jean Coralli, did not foresee. In any production, however, the moment when the heroine is summoned from the earth by Myrtha, Queen of the Wilis, and metamorphosed from a walking ghost into a dancing sprite must have a fantastical effect, which is produced through classical dancing: that effect is about dancing as an act of resurrection. A great version of this step that you don't see much anymore was the one popular with a generation of ballerinas between the World Wars. In this edition of Giselle's metamorphosis, the dancer somehow elevates herself to full point for a couple of arabesque pirouettes midway through the hopping sequence without either breaking the mechanistic spell of the hopping

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or moving the axis of her body to a new center. First, she's dividing a pie into equal pieces; then, she's whipping up eggnog to go with it—and she hasn't travelled an inch all the while. This kind of virtuosity requires a pig-iron strength in the foot, a quality that ballerinas of that period sought in their technique. To see that strength in action, look at Ludmilla Tcherina rehearsing the Ballet Lermontov's production of "Giselle" in "The Red Shoes." Her indomitable foot is not what we would call beautiful, but it's got character to die for.

This week, American Ballet Theatre clusters all of its "Giselle"s for the season. Among the ballerinas in the title role will be Alessandra Ferri (June 4 and 8) and Amanda McKerrow (June 5).

New York City Ballet—June 4 at 8: "Apollo," "Concertino," "Le Tombeau de Couperin," and "I'm Old Fashioned." . . . ¶ June 5 at 8: "Watermill" and "Who Cares?" . . . ¶ June 6 at 8: "Souvenir de Florence," "Valse-Fantaisie," "Apollo," and "The Concert." . . . ¶ June 7 at 8: "Scotch Symphony," "Ecstatic Orange," and "The Concert." . . . ¶ June 8 at 2: "Souvenir de Florence," "Four Gnossiennes," "Allegro Brillante," and "I'm Old Fashioned." . . . ¶ June 8 at 8: "Watermill," "Pas de Deux," and "Western Symphony." . . . ¶ June 9 at 1: "Watermill" and "Who Cares?" . . . ¶ June 9 at 7: "Apollo," "Le Tombeau de Couperin," "Valse-Fantaisie," and "The Concert." . . . ¶ June 11 at 8: "Scotch Symphony," "Ecstatic Orange," and "In G Major." . . . ¶ June 12 at 8: "Walpurgisnacht Ballet," "Robert Schumann's 'Davidsbündlertanze,' " and "Episodes." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through June 30.)

American Ballet Theatre—June 3 at 8: Act III of "Raymonda," "Fall River Legend," and "Brief Fling." . . . ¶ June 4 and June 6-7 at 8, and June 5 and June 8 at 2 and 8: "Giselle." . . . ¶ June 10 at 8: "Birthday Offering," Act II of "Swan Lake," and "Sinfonietta." . . . ¶ June 11 at 8: "Concerto," Act II of "Swan Lake," and "Brief Fling." . . . ¶ June 12 at 8: "Birthday Offering," Act II of "Swan Lake," and "Brief Fling." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. Through June 22.)

Dance Theatre of Harlem—Opening performances of a three-week engagement that will run through June 23. June 7 at 8, June 8 at 2 and 8, and June 9 at 3: "Tones," "Ginestera," and "Firebird." (Davis Hall, City College, Convent Ave. at 134th St. 650-7100.)

José Greco Company—Final performances of the engagement. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. June 4-7 at 8, June 8 at 2 and 8, and June 9 at 2.)

Lori Belilove and Company—Presenting "The Art of Isadora Duncan." (Good Shepherd–Faith Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. June 5-8 at 8. For reservations, call 691-5040.)

Pongsan Dance Drama of Korea—A troupe of fifteen dancers and musicians. (Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. 517-2742. June 8 at 8 and June 9 at 2 and 8.) (*)

Compagnie Philippe Saire—A contemporary Swiss company in "Ah! Finir." (Midtown Y, 344 E. 14th St. 673-2207. June 8-9 at 8.)(*)

Min Tanaka—In solo Butoh performances. (Ethnic Folk Arts Center, 179 Varick St. June 9-10 at 8:30. Tickets at the door on the nights of the performances.)

NIGHT LIFE

"HONEY, did you like that?" Diane Schuur called out after finishing the ballad "You Don't Remember Me" at the Blue Note the other night. "Which honey are you talking to?" a woman in the audience asked. "The one with the guide dog," the performer answered. Ms. Schuur, a thirty-seven-year-old, Seattle-based pianist and singer, is blind (as is her current boyfriend), and she's not reluctant to joke about it. It's tempting to compare Ms. Schuur to Ray Charles, not so much for the obvious reason as for others: both are versatile performers, comfortable in jazz, blues, R. & B., and pop, and both have an ecstatic, borderline-religious approach to music. Ms. Schuur, who has been gaining ground in jazz circles since the early eighties, and who has won two Grammys, recently released her eighth album, "Pure Schuur." With its nods to, among other things, Nat King Cole, contemporary pop, and soul, the record should further broaden her audience.

At New York City Ballet, "I'm Old Fashioned"

At the Blue Note, backed by keyboardist Peggy Stern, drummer Steve Johns, and bassist Sean Smith, she played a set that covered all the bases. In a breakaway, bebop-accented version of "Easy to Love," she sang in a bluesy growl, sang scat, and tossed off lyrics from classic rock songs. She gave a fired-up rendition of her pop-soul hit "Louisiana Sunday Afternoon," hammering out bass chords with her left hand; she offered a skillful pop interpretation of the Bacharachesque, mid-tempo ballad "Touch"; and she let the band cut loose on two Dave Brubeck numbers. Ms. Schuur infuses everything she does with a strong rhythmic pulse, and she and her band sound best when digging into a groove. She's also a performer who relishes connecting with her audience, which, on this night, was happy to connect right back. Aside from the blindness jokes, Ms. Schuur offered advice, uplift, sassy innuendo, and some Richard Simmons-vintage encouragement about losing weight (she herself recently lost quite a bit). Toward the end of the show, she stood up for a shout-blues number, while her boyfriend, who's a pianist, took her place, his guide dog curled up underneath the Steinway.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Abilene Café, 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (255-7373)—A reincarnated blues bar: the first Abilene led a low-profile life in the East Twenties until 1987; this one opened last year. The club, which is spacious, cheerful, and as plain as a brown-paper bag, won't win any prizes for atmosphere, but it has all the ingredients of a good blues bar: cheap grub, a modest cover charge, and a non-trendy crowd. The Dreyer Brothers perform here June 7-8 and the Bill Sims Blues Band comes in on June 9. A blues jam featuring Micha[illegible] Powers and his group starts up every Mo[illegible]day at nine. Music begins at nine-thirty on other nights, except on Fridays and Saturdays, when it begins at ten.

Apollo, 253 W. 125th St. (864-0372)—On Wednesdays, the theatre presents Amateur Night, a continuation of the legendary show that has launched the careers of such performers as Sarah Vaughan, Ella Fitzgerald, Sammy Davis, Jr., and Billie Holiday. Vocalists, dancers, musicians, and comedians participate. It's a chance to file away a memory for a later "I knew him/her when." Show time is seven-thirty.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—It's everything a cabaret should be: sleek, elegant, intimate, and slightly decadent. It also offers something that other cabarets do not: tapas, which come from the Spanish restaurant adjoining the club. The Brazilian singer **ELBA RAMALHO**, who wears outfits that might have come from Liberace's estate sale, and whose music is a hybrid of samba and Las Vegas, is on the premises through June 12.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—Many musicians who visit this jazz house are honored—if that's the word—by having their portraits done, "in concert," by the house artist. These impressionistic renderings round out a glossy décor that includes flying-saucer light fixtures, burgundy velvet drapes, and some neon wading birds. Pianist **BARRY HARRIS** leads a trio here June 7-8. Music from nine. Dining.

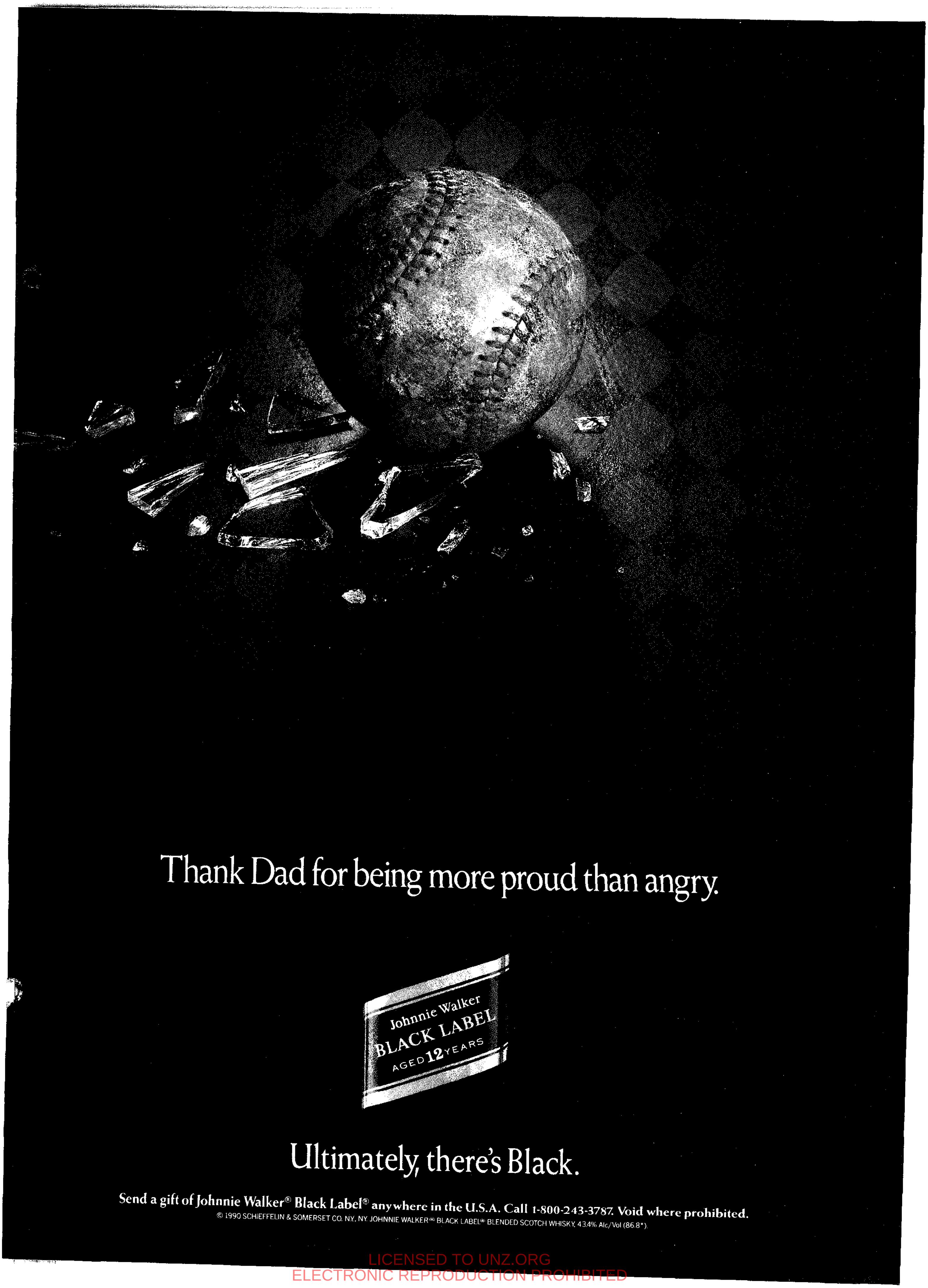
Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—This blue-on-blue club is the place to find big-league jazz artists; it's an institution and it knows it: how many other clubs sell their own belt buckles? The **MODERN JAZZ QUARTET**, which has been doing its fastidious swinging for forty years and has over four hundred pieces in its repertoire, is on hand June 4-9. The week beginning June 11 belongs to vibist **LIONEL HAMPTON** and the Golden Men of Jazz, an aptly named assemblage that includes **HANK JONES, MILT HINTON, GRADY TATE, CLARK TERRY, JON FADDIS, HARRY (SWEETS) EDISON, BUDDY TATE**, and **AL GREY**. Music from nine. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A big room where they pack them in until someone says uncle. **LUCINDA WILLIAMS**, a Louisiana-born singer and songwriter whose compelling blend of rock, blues, and shit-kicking-cowgirl country has earned her a wide following in the past few years, appears on June 5. The wised-up, wisecracking postmodern trio **BETTY**, whose shows shamelessly mix cabaret, performance art, Henny Youngman, and Funkadelics, performs June 7-8. **SUN RA** and his 21st Century Echoes Arkestra play on June 10, Courtney Pine plays in a trio on June 11, and **TOWER OF POWER** begins a three-nighter on June 12. Shows at eight and eleven. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar where, if your neighbors coöperate, you can hear the beautiful, singular sound of musicians thinking. Through June 9, two pianos fill the performing space, one manned by **KENNY BARRON** and the other by **JOHN HICKS**. Sax player **CHICO FREEMAN** leads a group beginning on June 10. Music after nine-forty-five. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle is home to patron saint **BOBBY SHORT** Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans' Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** presides at the piano from nine-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays.

Cat Club, 76 E. 13th St. (505-0090)—Every Sunday night, this club, usually dominated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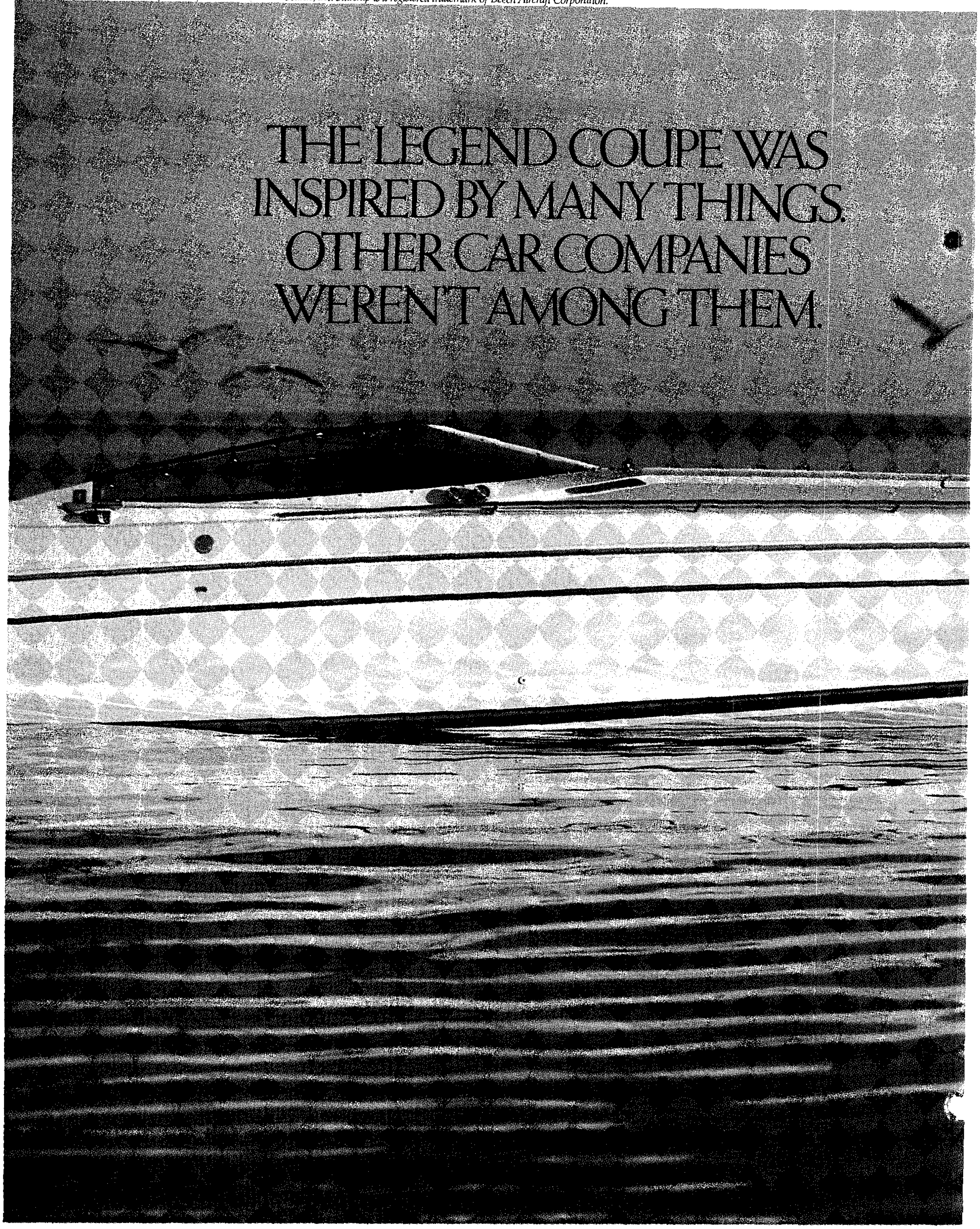
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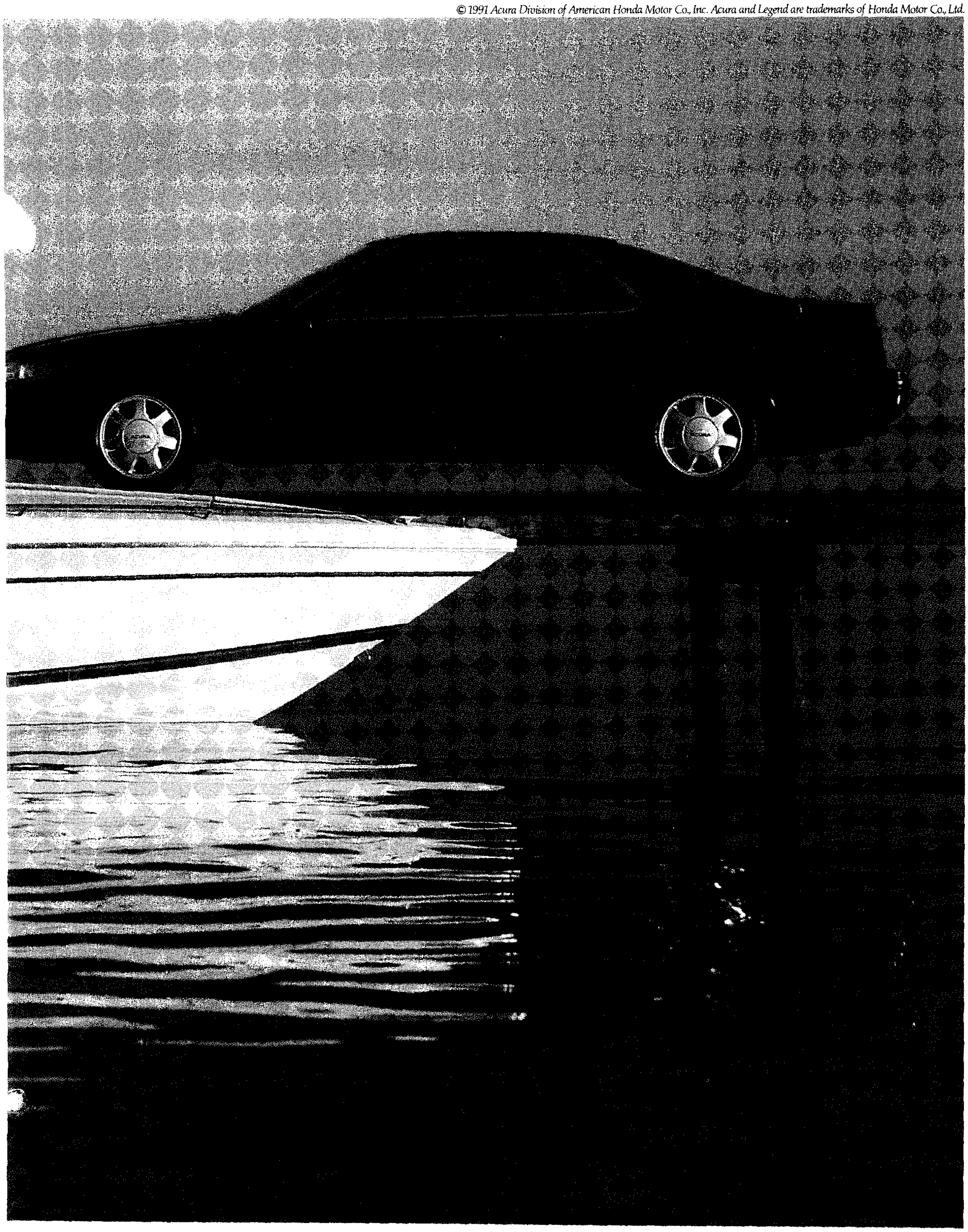

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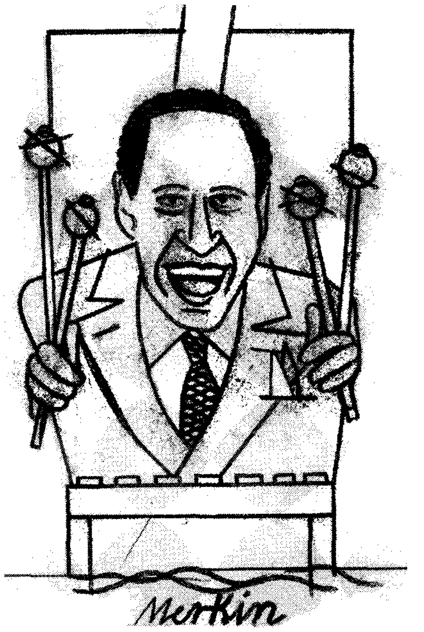
by heavy-metal fans, is ceded to a gang of Lindy Hop enthusiasts called the New York Swing Dance Society. An older couple glides across the floor, lost in a nostalgic reverie; an eager young man, his tie loosened, his face perspiring, throws his date around like a crazed cossack. June 9 belongs to the **HARLEM BLUES AND JAZZ BAND.** Music from eight to midnight.

Condon's, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—In the shadow of the Zeckendorf Towers sits this stucco-walled grotto, whose intimate scale makes it a fine spot for jazz. The **MICHAEL CARVIN** quintet is in evidence June 4-9. The **DAVID MURRAY** octet begins a stand on June 11. Murray, an influential, free-jazz-leaning tenor saxophonist with a combustive attack, was a co-founder of the World Saxophone Quartet. He led a big band here a few weeks back, an engagement that had many critics and aficionados dusting off their prayer mats. Music after nine.

Delta 88, 332 Eighth Ave., at 26th St. (924-3499)—A pleasant hangout for white-collar trash, where you'll find cold Dixie beer, collard greens, and plenty of men who know how to wear a leather vest. As if that weren't enough, the bar-and-restaurant also features a corrugated-tin ceiling and a truckload of sort-of-Southern items: a photo booth, a giant Amoco sign, an Evel Knievel lunchbox. **JOAN OSBORNE,** who will be performing here June 5 and June 11, sings a bright, pop-inflected variety of blues. She has a wonderfully raspy voice, and is often seen slinking about the stage in a sleeveless dress, shaking her kinky reddish hair, and lolling her head dreamily back and forth. Her sets include covers ("Son-of-a-Preacher Man," "Me and Bobby McGee") and originals. Chicken-fried steak, deep-fried crawdads (a.k.a. Cajun popcorn), and other exotic Southern fare.



Lionel Hampton at the Blue Note

Eagle Tavern, 355 W. 14th St. (924-0275)—An Irish bar, way out on the western edge of town, where the great potholed boulevards turn to cobblestones, and the world across the Hudson flashes its come-hither signs. The back room has Hibernian sounds on Fridays and bluegrass on Saturdays. **FIONA DOHERTY, DENIS GALVIN,** and **STEVE JOHNSON** appear on June 7. Sets at nine and eleven.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—Through the iffy-looking side door, down the famous fun-house tunnel that's lined with mirrors and corrugated tin, and down a short flight of stairs, you'll find this softly lit, low-ceilinged, roughly Manhattan-shaped jazz preserve. The graceful, melodic bebop guitarist **KENNY BURRELL** appears with the **CEDAR WALTON** trio June 4-9. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12			

Fortune Garden Pavilion, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—With jazz you get eggroll. At this posh-looking two-floor Chinese restaurant, tucked into a midtown skyscraper, you'll find a lot of business people and a lot of hanging plants. In the middle of the main dining room, you'll also find a Steinway grand, which through June 6 belongs to the reclusive Cape Codder **DAVE MC KENNA.** McKenna, a hulking man with white hair and an aquiline nose, is an inventive, hard-swinging pianist with a strong left hand. The Robert Silverman duo holds forth on June 10, and the **JANE JARVIS** duo moves in for a week beginning on June 11. Music from six-thirty.

Kilimanjaro, 531 W. 19th St. (627-2333)—The northern branch of the popular Washington, D.C., night spot. As the name suggests, African music is the sine qua non, be it live or d.j.-spun. Calypso, reggae, and world-beat formats also turn up; in any case, the huge dance floor seldom lies fallow. Music from eleven-thirty.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—A frat house for the avant-garde. In some ways, the Knitting Factory doesn't really belong in New York: the cover charge is too reasonable, the management is too laid-back, the audiences are too polite. It's a slice of post-collegiate counterculture that somehow landed on Houston Street, of all places. The music is another story—much of the time, it exemplifies urban angst. **WAYNE HORVITZ'S THE PRESIDENT** is here June 6-7; **ELLIOTT SHARP'S CARBON** claims June 8. Music after nine.

Lauterbach's Brooklyn Beat, 335 Prospect Ave., at Sixth Ave., Brooklyn. (1-718 788-9140)—A grungy but well-intentioned watering hole devoted to homegrown Brooklyn bands. The emphasis here is on exposed cement, although one wall is decorated with Polaroids—"St. Patty's 1986" (people in green hats and leis), "New Year's 1988-89" (people in red hats and leis). Lauterbach's microwave menu includes shepherd's pie and chicken parmigiana, but the musical menu is almost always a better bet.

Lone Star Roadhouse, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—A cheery, climate-controlled restaurant-and-bar featuring a load of snazzy Gibson guitars, some Washington Square-style portraits of folks like Bo Diddley and Dr. John, and funky French fry–potato chip hybrids. A bleary-eyed patron here was heard remarking, "I don't know about you people, but I'm feeling a lot of love in this room." **JORMA KAUKONEN** performs on June 6, and the **NERDS** come in on June 7. Music after nine.

Marquee, 547 W. 21st St. (929-3257)—A rock club, just off the West Side Highway, that is one of the city's main venues for college-radio fare. This week: **KITCHENS OF DISTINCTION** (June 7); **PANTERA, WRATHCHILD,** and **MORDRED** (June 8); and the **FARM** (June 12).

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—A good sound system, cheap drinks, and a regular-guy atmosphere make this restaurant-bar, home of the Hoboken Sound and of the phrase "jangly guitars," a popular hangout for musicians and their followers. Manhattanites who stay through the second set will need all their Scout training to get home, but the aroma coming from the nearby Maxwell House factory might give them a boost. **KITCHENS OF DISTINCTION** and Raw Youth perform on June 5. June 7 belongs to the **REIVERS,** a likable, winsome guitar-pop band, formerly known as Zeitgeist, that has unaccountably been lost in the shuffle.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—Jelly Roll Morton—whose business card billed him as the "creator of ragtime" and to whom is attributed the famous remark "I invented jazz in 1902"—and his Red Hot Peppers are the subject of a celebration here just now. For anyone needing a refresher course on the late pianist's work, RCA recently released an exhaustive multi-disk set of his Victor recordings, and Marcus Roberts tipped his hat Morton's way a couple of times on his latest record, "Alone with Three Giants." Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen, featuring pianist Terry Waldo at the helm of a spirited septet.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A moondust-in-your-hair cabaret where a club soda costs, well, a *lot*. There are plenty of niceties if you're so inclined: an ear-popping express elevator in which you can mingle with the famous; tables scattered with plastic diamonds and sapphires; and rest-room attendants who hover near the sink asking, "Is the water too warm?" Singer **MAUREEN MC GOVERN,** who winds up an engagement here on June 8, was once known as "the disaster-theme queen" (she sang the theme to "The Poseidon Adventure," among other things) but has since made a name for herself as a cabaret singer. Ms. McGovern, who has a powerful, versatile four-octave voice, is presently concentrating on Cole Porter. Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—It may look like a plain old steakhouse, and the photos on the walls may look like Sardi's leftovers, but in the back room you'll find swing bands, Dixieland combos, and couples sprung from the legacy of Fred and Ginger. **VINCE GIORDANO AND THE NIGHTHAWKS** time-travel to the nineteen-thirties every Tuesday: wearing natty tuxedoes and seated behind felt-bannered music stands, they run through original arrangements by the likes of Hoagy Carmichael and Fletcher Henderson. Show times vary.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—This former luncheonette has a tropical motif—straw huts, bamboo, a fake palm tree, a mosaic of gourds—and one of the city's more international booking policies: Brazil, Africa, and the Caribbean are just a few of the places explored. The **REBIRTH BRASS BAND** holds forth on June 5. Music from nine Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from ten Fridays and Saturdays. Dining. Closed Sundays.

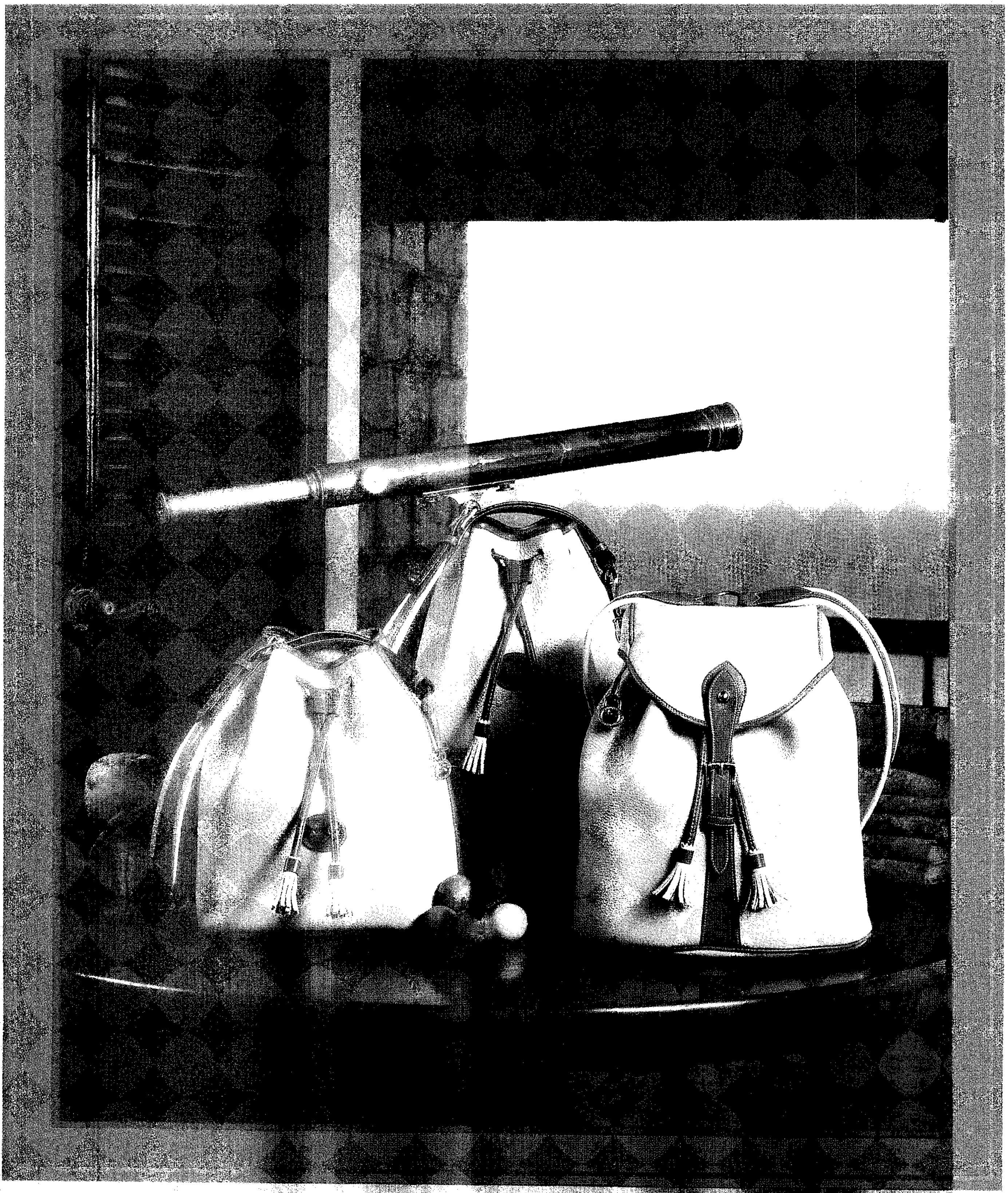
Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—An itinerary stop for the international jazz groupies who, on any given night, can be seen roaming the streets of the Village. Pianist **MC COY TYNER** leads a trio Tuesdays through Sundays. Tyner puts on extraordinary and, for the most part, well-attended shows. His playing, which segues seamlessly from the thunderous and showy to the lyrical and understated, is only a part of the package. Tyner's partners—bassist **AVERY SHARPE** and drummer **AARON SCOTT**—are with him every step of the way. The highlight of an appearance here not long ago, in fact, was Sharpe's solo on "Monk's Dream." The electrified big band of the late Gil Evans, now under the direction of his son, the trumpeter Miles Evans, is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

Tramps, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Located on a Chelsea block that has become an urban Disneyland (a pool hall, an indoor miniature-golf course, a trendy all-night diner, Limelight around the corner), this roller-rink-size bar-and-restaurant is a little slicker and a lot roomier than the original Tramps, but the emphasis on solid rock and blues remains.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—This windowless, pie-shaped basement has an illustrious history that embraces everyone from Judy Holliday to Lenny Bruce, from Pete Seeger and Leadbelly to Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins. The décor is homey and a little faded, like an attic full of memorabilia. Guitarist **BARNEY KESSEL,** whose five-decade career has included stints with Artie Shaw and Oscar Peterson, leads a trio here June 4-9; the **DAVID (FATHEAD) NEWMAN** quintet, featuring tenor-sax player James Clay, starts up on June 11. Mondays are reserved for the **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA.** Music after nine-thirty.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A rarity among jazz clubs: somewhere you'd go to eat even if there were no music. The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. Pianist **GEOFF KEEZER** and bassist **PETER WASHINGTON** perform here through June 8; the trio of **JOHN BUNCH, BUCKY PIZZARELLI,** and **JAY LEONHART** begin a week-long run on June 10. Music from eight.

h Nguyen



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EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

SINCE you can be a virgin just once, Love Ball 2: The Crowning Glory had to suffer from a loss of innocence. This time, there was another event to compare it to (the first Love Ball, held two years ago); this time, vogueing had become almost as easy to find on commercials as Paula Abdul; and, this time, we had some idea what to wear. Blinded though ticket-holders were by a relentless cascade of sequins, beads, feathers, mirrors, rhinestones, paint, lamé, glitter, gilt, and enough flamboyance to overshadow a Mummers' parade, they were still able to focus on the award-winning Kingdoms of Florent and Barneys onstage. But there was no way to comprehend the crown-worthy showstopping by the following unscripted party people in the House of Roseland:

—From the Kingdom of Ultra-Line Waiting: A crimson-tressed standee with white bangs shouted down Broadway, "Tom? Oh, God, I lost my colorist. We've been together for fourteen years. It's the only successful relationship I've ever had."

—From the Kingdom of Sexual Disorientasia/Male Division: Certain members of the press realized that the guy in the bike-shorts-tight leather pants and open-to-the-belt-buckle white shirt was the porn star Jeff Stryker, and proceeded to follow his every step across the celebrity waiting area, desperate for an interview but too tongue-tied to ask for one.

—From the Kingdom of B 4 U Werbornia: Ann Corio, founder of the long-running road show "This Was Burlesque," gracefully glided in front of an audience too young to understand how much the evening's unclad performance art owes to her.

—From the Kingdom of Waitravaganza: The G-stringed Bergèreian waitperson at Table 82, faced with a circle of guests refusing to eat the white shard (determined, by process of elimination, to be chicken), declared that we shouldn't feel bad, "because a woman at the next table thought it was a napkin and tried to unfold it on her dress."

—From the Kingdom of Sexual Disorientasia/Female Division: At the after-the-ball party at the Copa, a guy ran up to a chain-link-chapeaued, heavily lashed young lady cavorting on a platform. She wasn't who he thought she was. "Who do I look like?" she asked. "My ex-roommate Peter," he said.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

New Traditions in East Asian Bar Bands—Wayne Horvitz, Fred Frith, Joey Baron, Anthony Coleman, and others will play music by John Zorn; afterward, a movie with an Asian theme will be shown. (American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. 1-718 784-0077. June 8 at 3 and 7, and June 9 at 3.) (*)

Benefit—Performances by Vanessa Redgrave, Phoebe Légère, Helen Gallagher, and many others. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. June 5-8 at 8.)

Kenneth Noland

ART

THERE'S an interestingly offbeat Robert Motherwell show right now at Knoedler (19 East 70th Street; through June 28), of paintings and drawings, large and small—made between 1958 and the present—that have been hung atelier-style in order to evoke the artist's studio in Connecticut. The purpose, it seems, is to give us some sense of which older Motherwells Motherwell looks at when he is working on new Motherwells. There really is a sort of mad, absurdist humor to this when you realize that you are looking at work by one of the world's most consistent painters. Motherwell, indeed, is our great textbook modernist—a terribly well-educated painter of profound and rather impersonal good taste. His idea of a joke, for instance, may be gleaned from a chic little red painting with a brownish blur that—referring no doubt to the famous little boy with his pets at the Met—is titled "The Disappearance of Goya's Dog." It is difficult to guess the dates of Motherwell's works just by looking. Two beautiful big paintings from 1991—craggily grand, and in the artist's most characteristic blacks and browns—seem almost exactly like vintage Motherwells. They are, perhaps, a little tighter and sharper around the edges. Three very Picassoesque horse-head drawings in the exhibition are another case in point. In terms of style and thematic reference, they could have been painted at any time since "Guernica" was completed. Yet during Motherwell's classic period—the New York School heyday of the forties and fifties—he was a staunch abstractionist. The horse heads, you decide, must be relatively recent. Perhaps a mellower Motherwell was affected by the great 1980 Picasso show at the Museum of Modern Art. The drawings' dates (all 1982) would certainly seem to support this thesis.

Self-portrait by Anne Truitt

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Museum Mile Festival—The thirteenth annual open house takes place June 11, from six to nine in the evening. Fifth Avenue between 82nd and 104th Streets is accessible to pedestrians and street performers only, and seven of the museums along the way are free of charge.

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—The works in "Masterpieces of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism" are from the Annenberg Collection, and include Cézanne's "Mont Sainte-Victoire" and van Gogh's "La Berceuse (Woman Rocking a Cradle)". . . . ¶ "The Sculpture of Indonesia" includes more than a hundred and thirty-five bronzes life-size stone sculptures, and ceremonial objects dating from the eighth century to the fifteenth. Through Aug. 18. . . . ¶ A large exhibition of paintings, drawings, and etchings by Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863). Also on view is a sketchbook from Delacroix's 1828 trip to Touraine. Through June 16. . . . ¶ Illuminated pages and decorative designs from Islamic books produced in Iran, Turkey, and India from the fourteenth century through the nineteenth. Through Aug. 18. . . . **NOTE:** The museum's roof garden, planted with nine sculptures by Rodin, is open when the weather permits. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—Ninety-five paintings, collages, and gouaches by Ad Reinhardt (1913-67). . . . ¶ Designs for South American gardens and parks by the Brazilian landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx. Through Aug. 13. . . . ¶ An installation of a huge blanket of stainless-steel hair, with one end suspended from the ceiling, by Kyoko Kumai, a Japanese fibre artist. Although the work is sophisticated in its use of materials, it's sculpturally uninteresting. Through June 18. . . . ¶ Fifty-five prints from the eighties by Johns, Hockney, Rauschenberg, Lichtenstein, Dine, Rosenquist, and Stella. Through Aug. 13. . . . ¶ "Mean Streets" is a show of street photographs from the forties through the eighties by such artists as Lisette Model, Garry Winogrand, and Todd Webb. Through July 16. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until early 1992.

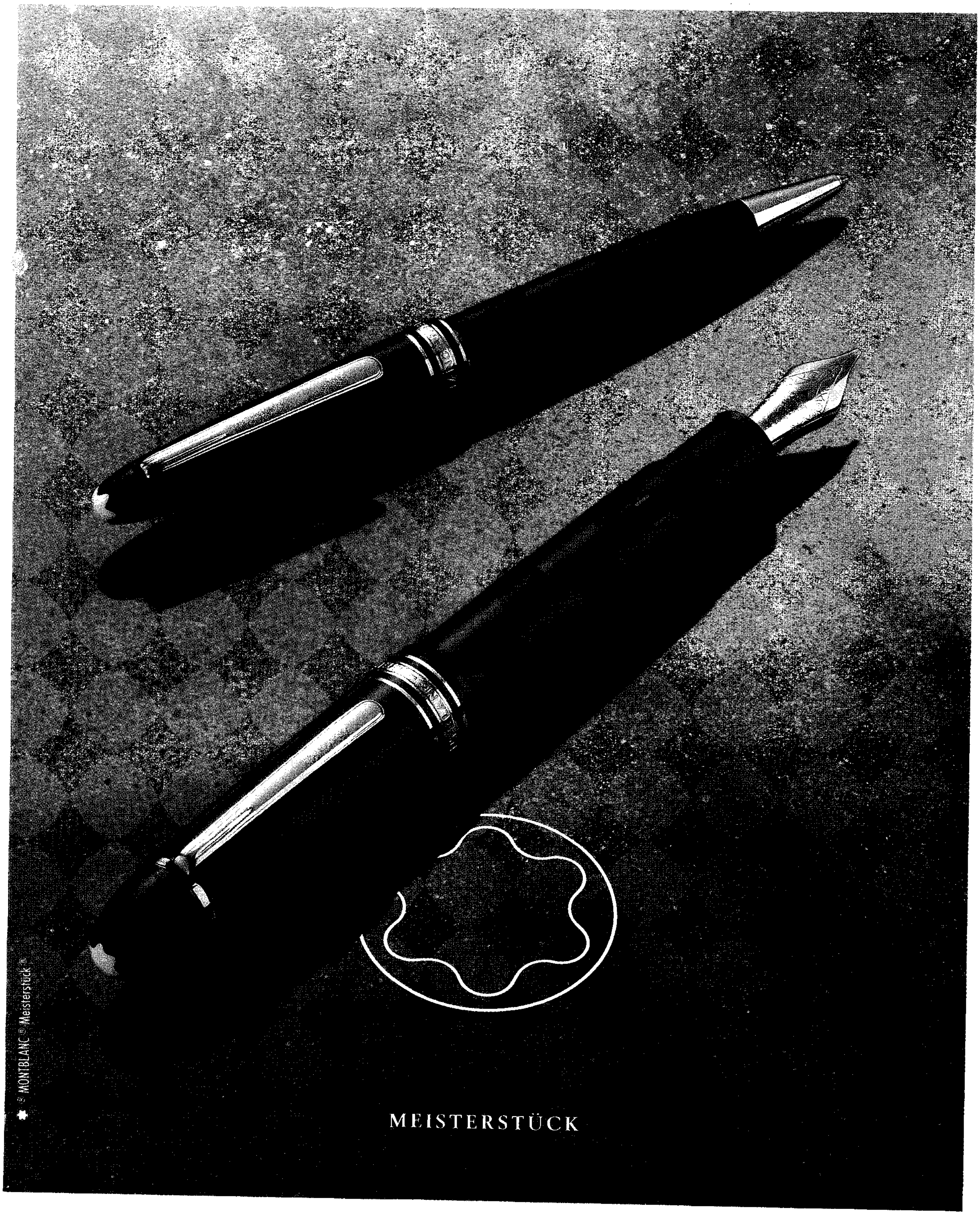
Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—The Biennial: work by artists whose stars began to rise in the fifties and sixties is on the second floor; work by artists who emerged in the seventies and eighties is on the third floor; and work by late-eighties and nineties artists is on the fourth floor. The "AIDS Timeline," by Group Material, is in the lobby. Through June 16. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—Leon Golub's first three-dimensional installation, titled "WorldWide." Through June 16. . . . ¶ Forty works of art from Oceania (mostly from the Sepik and Ramu river basins in New Guinea), including three-inch-long fishhooks, three monumental carved-wood "guardians," and a skull rack made of palm, raffia, and bamboo. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, Broadway at 155th St.—The Academy's annual exhibition of works by newly elected artists, including Robert Arneson, Jane Wilson, William T. Wiley, and Shirley Smith. Through June 9. (Open daily, except Mondays, 1 to 4.)

China Institute, 125 E. 65th St.—Forty-one ancient Chinese bronze vessels, weapons, and personal ornaments ranging from the nineteenth century B.C. (the beginning of the Erlitou era) to the third century A.D. (the end of the Han dynasty). Through June 15. (Open Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—"From Pontormo to Seurat," a show of sixty-one drawings from the Art Institute of Chicago, including works by Géricault, Redon, Delacroix, and Degas. Through July 7. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)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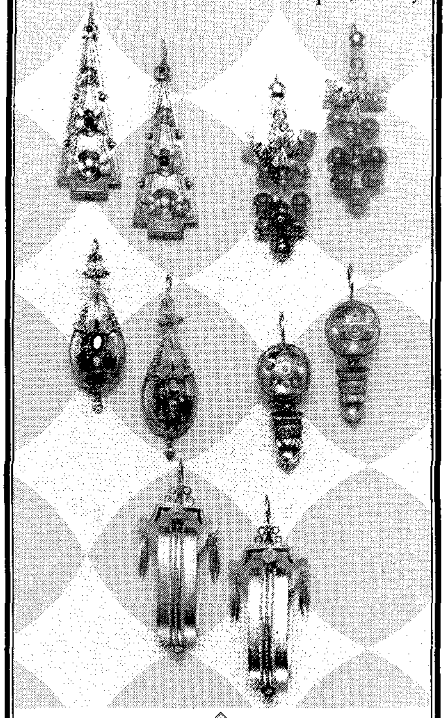

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ART–Cont'd

Jewish Museum, at the New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—"Painting a Place in America" gathers the work of fifty Jewish-American painters and sculptors working in New York between 1900 and 1945. Among the artists represented are Adolph Gottlieb, Louise Nevelson, Chaim Gross, Mark Rothko, and Max Weber. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5; Fridays, 10 to 3.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Mozart: Prodigy of Nature." A comprehensive exhibition of all things Mozart. The show includes more than fifty manuscripts, from four pieces composed at age five to a first draft of the Requiem; early letters home from his first trip to Italy (December, 1769) and his last letter to his father (April, 1787); and his "Verzeichnüss aller meiner Werke" ("Catalogue of All My Works"), which he kept for the last seven years of his life. Through Aug. 4. . . . ¶ Eighteenth-century drawings, from the library's collection, by the Venetian masters Tiepolo, Guardi, and Canaletto. Through Aug. 4. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Museo del Barrio, 1230 Fifth Ave., at 104th St.—The "Nuyorican" experience is alive in the work of Pepón Osorio, who moved to New York from Puerto Rico in 1975. At the entrance to this retrospective of his work is a fancy, fake-Venetian chandelier further ornamented by a trove of tacky tchotchkes, ranging from dominoes and water pistols to plastic ferns and tiny, brittle street-stand dolls. Other lightly nostalgic and comic charmers—some the results of performance collaborations with Merián Soto, the artist's choreographer wife—include "La Cama," a room-size work, with bed and coverlet, dedicated to the artist's nanny, and "Broken Hearts," a set piece, featuring luggage, about the dashed dreams of immigrants from the south. "The Wake," a life-size replica of a funeral parlor full of coffins and body bags, is a harrowing depiction of AIDS, both solemn and almost grotesquely disorienting in a museum setting. Through Aug. 4. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—In the exhibition "Illustrating Nature: The Art of Botany," the New York Botanical Garden's collection is represented by ninety-five watercolors, pen-and-ink drawings, books, and dried plant specimens. (Open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—"Africa Explores: Twentieth-Century African Art" presents more than a hundred art works in various mediums. The works are divided into five categories: "Traditional," "New Functional," "Urban," "International," and "Extinct." The Center for African Art has organized the exhibition, which runs simultaneously in its galleries, at 54 E. 68th St. (Open daily, except Mondays; opens Sundays at noon.) Through Aug. 18. . . . ¶ In a show called "Embodying Faith," five contemporary artists tackle the theme of the relationship between the physical and the spiritual in Christianity. Through Aug. 18. . . . ¶ In the museum's Broadway windows is an installation by the Catalan artist Perejaume, titled "Pintura i Representació," that consists of two visitor-accessible rows of theatre seats. Through Aug. 18. . . . ¶ "Eclipse of the Earth," an installation by Kazuo Katase. Through Aug. 18. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Kingdoms of Land, Sea, and Sky" includes a hundred and eighty zoological woodcuts, engravings, and watercolors by artists and naturalists such as Albrecht Dürer, John James Audubon, Edward Lear, and Maria Sibylla Merian. Through Aug. 24. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall. Open Mondays through Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.) . . . ¶ Sixty-three prints by Reginald Marsh (1898-1954), depicting New York scenes from the twenties and thirties. Through June 29. (Third Floor Gallery. Open Mondays through Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.) . . . ¶ A display of recently acquired rare books and manuscripts, including Joseph Conrad's manuscript for "The Secret Sharer" and Washington Irving's manuscript for "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." (Berg Collection. Open Mondays through Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

COMMUTER COMFORT

The streets of Manhattan may be paved with potholes, but at least one city wall is covered in gold: as part of an ongoing renovation of the Herald Square subway station, sculptor Michele Oka Doner designed and oversaw the construction of a hundred-and-sixty-five-foot-long mezzanine wall made in part of the precious metal. The passageway, which consists of eleven thousand brick-shaped tiles coated in gold-lustre glaze, leads from the station entrance at 34th Street and Sixth Avenue to the entrance ramp of the Brooklyn-bound N and R trains. The amount of glaze gradually decreases toward the top and bottom of the wall, giving the illusion of a warm glow emanating from the wall's center. Ms. Doner, a frequent designer of public art, said that she wanted to create something that would soothe the commuter. "I don't believe in confrontational art—the amount of aggression in the city is already overwhelming. I think of the project as a spiritual sculpture. Of course, I couldn't sell it to the city that way. You can't say, 'I want to build a spiritual sculpture in the middle of midtown.' But that's what it is. Each of the eighteen thousand people who walk along the wall each day becomes enveloped by this mysterious power." Ms. Doner believes that such an aura will be strong enough to help fend off graffiti. "The wall's been up, in one form or another, for seven months, and there hasn't been a problem with it. People deface things that make them feel small or impotent. This wall makes them feel good."

Queens Museum, Flushing Meadow Park—"Interrelations and Migration: Contemporary Sculpture from Germany" is an exhibition of four artists—Erwin Heerich, Norbert Kricke, Abraham David Christian, and Katsuhito Nishikawa—who have worked in Düsseldorf. Through July 7. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—A retrospective of works by Romare Bearden (1912-88), which includes a hundred and forty-one oils, collages, and watercolors. Through Aug. 11. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Brice Marden—A midsize show of new drawings and etchings by our great aesthete abstractionist. Marden's line has been making like the bacchants for the last couple of years, nowhere so freely, perhaps, as on paper. Where the paintings have a sonorous ceremonial rhythm, the drawings suggest jitterbugs and dervish whirls—rigorous, mind-altering dances. Marden's greens, alternately mossy and sun-faded, are themselves a trip and a half. Through June 28. (Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

Short List—**MARCEL BROODTHAERS,** Werner, 21 E. 67th St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through July 3); **FRITZ BULTMAN,** Schlesinger, 24 E. 73rd St., and Kouros, 23 E. 73rd St. (through June 15); **JEAN DUBUFFET,** Elkon, 18 E. 81st St. (through June 8); **SAM FRANCIS,** Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through June 28); **ROBERT MOTHERWELL,** Knoedler, 19 E.

70th St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through June 28); **KENNETH NOLAND,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. (open Mondays, through June 29); **FRITZ SCHOLDER,** Alexander, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through June 21); **SALLY SCUFFLE,** Mark Milliken, 1200 Madison Ave., at 87th St. (open Mondays, through June 29).

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

GROUP SHOW—Maura Sheehan, Kim Jones, and Brett De Palma are not, in common parlance, "uptown artists," which is why it's fun to see their work at the normally proper Herstand gallery. Sheehan is known for madcap installations of a tinselly charm, on themes involving geopolitics and the magic of ritual. "Trade Winds," her work here, is an enticingly summery piece that includes jalousies sporting scenic painting, an electric fan decked out in boating flags, piles of white and brown sugar connoting the North and the South, and a map on which Latin America looms especially large. Jones' installation is recognizable at once by its clusters of sticks suggesting bursts of shrapnel and by its all-over device of splattered mud—a bit as if Richard Long had gone to combat instead of on country walks. Here, however, Jones' familiar working style assumes an air of remote formality. It is De Palma who gains most from the trappings of refinement. Not an installation artist at all, he deploys an arsenal of styles ranging from Cubism to psychedelia, and his paintings, however polished their frames, and for all their domestication, are really wild at heart—a lot wilder, in fact, than Fauve art. Through June 29. (24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

SHORT LIST—**ENRICO BAJ,** Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through June 14); **DANIEL BARRETT,** ACA, 41 E. 57th St. (through June 22); **JED GARET,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through June 21); **FRANCES HYNES,** Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through June 21), and Kelly, 591 Broadway (through June 8); **GARY KUEHN,** Drake, 50 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through June 7); **GEORGE SEGAL,** Janis, 110 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through June 8); **ANNE TRUITT,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through June 28); **MANOLO VALDES,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through June 21).

GALLERIES—SoHo

GREGORY CRANE—Bentonesque regionalism lives in these magical farm-world landscape paintings depicting paths lined with giant thistles. The works contain only occasional suggestions of human life, an aspect that enhances their mystery. Through June 15. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

JAMES HYDE—Although this artist has some interesting tricks up his sleeve, too often they're little more than clever sleights of hand. Several of these multi-panel works consist of lovely frescoes—including one of horizontal stripes, another of a delicate field of mottled deep green and fuchsia—that the artist intrudes upon with non-art materials, such as a bag of water or a heavy steel frame. In one painting a bar of concrete and a bar of cast glass are perched on a steel beam, perilously close to the edge. While these pieces are lively parables of painting, they sometimes veer too close to a contorted Constructivism. Through June 8. (Good, 532 Broadway.)

ALFRED LESLIE—Large charcoal drawings of a nude female model. Leslie uses a high-contrast, Caravaggioesque light and positions his model in odd reclining poses; then he draws her in such a way that she appears "righted." The effect is disorienting. So is the contrast between the deliberately manipulated poses and the woman's facial expressions, which are calm and self-commanding. The artist is a master of his medium, and he proves that realism is not necessarily *retardataire,* just excessively abused. Through June 29. (Flynn, 113 Crosby St.)

SHERRIE LEVINE—For some time now, Levine has been taking on the conceptual giant of the twentieth century, Marcel Duchamp. She appropriates that master appropriator's forms, and neutralizes and reforms them through feminist discourse. She began with paintings of chessboards, continued with elegant glass sculptures of Duchamp's "Malic Molds," and continues further in this dramatic, intelligent, and beautiful show. The first room of the Boone gallery has been transformed into an artifactual display of a rarefied men's club, with four identical billiard tables lifted from a painting by Man Ray. The second room contains more specifically Duchampian works: a series of highly polished, identical bronze urinals that are a cross between Brancusis and baby shoes. Beyond that are a group of six monochrome oil paintings, each in a different Yves Klein color, called "Meltdowns." All the works here are, in a sense, meltdowns of art works—exquisitely crafted markers that titillate the desire for good painting and sculpture while also subverting it. Through June 29. (417 West Broadway.)

TIMUR NOVIKOV—Unlike much of the Soviet art that has reached New York, Novikov's narrative paintings are sweet and the product of a light touch. All the works in this show consist of two contrasting pieces of fabric sewn together along a horizon line of sorts; small painted elements added to the fabric set the narratives in motion. Without being derivative, Novikov's work is something of a cross between Robert Kushner's and Nicholas Africano's. He deals with themes of travel, mobility, and transition with a deliberate, perhaps even defiant softness, but also with an underlying sense of resignation—a belief in an unalterable predestiny. Through June 29. (Kind, 136 Greene St.)

SEAN SCHERER / "CULTURE OF MATERIALS"—Faux-Constructivist paintings by a twenty-two-year-old artist. The works are executed with the care of homages, but are so overdone that they seem to be parodies, too. The larger ones are better, more Scherer's own. Through June 15. / One floor below is a modest display of small works by some of the original Constructivists, including an Ivan Kliun relief from 1916-17, a delightful tiny Ilya Chasnik drawing with thick collage elements, and a collaged assemblage by Yuri Annenkov. Through June 15. (Stux, 155 Spring St.)

RANDALL SCHMIT—Schmit's work has a lot of vitality. He orchestrates a ferocious assortment of images—surrealistic pastiches, art-historical quotes à la Krazy Kat, true confessions, such as a self-portrait in which he appears as a Byronic dandy—in dynamic compositions that are fundamentally abstract. The colors are caustic, the mood is manic; this painter is good and gutsy. Through June 8. (Donohue, 560 Broadway.)

PETER SCHUYFF—Three tall, skinny, essentially abstract paintings of what look like upholstery details. The works are so skillfully executed—they show a sophisticated sense of color and light and have some fine brushwork—and are so dramatically installed that one can easily be seduced into thinking that there's something more than great skill behind them. They are, in fact, also difficult to dismiss, and are best appreciated as joyful decorative painting. Through June 29. (Kasmin, 580 Broadway. Open Mondays, closed Saturdays.)

CLAUDE SIMARD—This artist almost succeeds in creating a haunting show with poetic resonance. But several cheap, theatrical tricks—like a group of life-size sculptures of men in purple shrouds on wall-mounted shelves, and a fake escape hatch attached to the ceiling—push the exhibit into the realm of the obvious and pretentious. Through July 2. (Shainman, 560 Broadway.)

RUDOLF STINGEL—For this exhibition, the artist, who is primarily known for monochrome paintings made according to a standard recipe, has covered the floor with a plush orange wall-to-wall carpet. The work is very late-seventies in spirit, harking back to a period when there was no star system to speak of and art was valued more for the ideas it examined and the assumptions it challenged than for its position within the hierarchy of the market. Both irony and optimism are evident here. Through June 15. (Newburg, 580 Broadway.)

ROBERT THERRIEN—A group of varied and usually compelling sculptures that explore the edge between abstraction and representation. Through June 21. (65 Thompson Street Gallery. Closed Saturdays.)

SHORT LIST—**GARY BROTMEYER,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. (through June 29); **JAIME DAVIDOVICH,** Exit Art, 578 Broadway (through July 13); **CHARLES GAINES,** Weber, 142 Greene St., and Castelli, 578 Broadway (through June 22); **JOHN GUNDELFINGER,** Perlow, 560 Broadway (through June 26); **JANE HAMMOND,**

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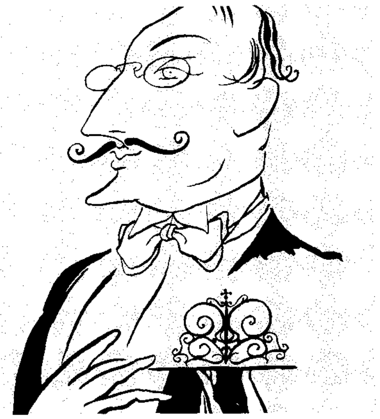

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ART—Cont'd

Fiction-Nonfiction, 21 Mercer St. (through June 8); **PAUL ÉTIENNE LINCOLN,** Burgin, 130 Prince St. (through June 29); **GIAN MARCO MONTESANO,** Nosei, 100 Prince St. (through June 28); **DAVID NYZIO** and **VINCENT SHINE,** Postmasters, 80 Greene St. (through June 15); **FRANZ WEST** and **MATHIS ESTERHAZY,** Wingate, 578 Broadway (through June 22); **GILBERTO ZORIO,** SteinGladstone, 99 Wooster St. (through July 27).

OTHER GALLERIES

SHIGEKO KUBOTA—A retrospective of video sculptures and concrete poems. The atmosphere pervading the two floors here—one lit low, the other brightly—suggests a metaphysical World's Fair. Among the many highlights are "Adam and Eve"—an astral pair revolving at different speeds, with wood limbs and monitor guts—and the blue-mirrored "Video Byobu III (Birds)," in which psychedelic avian patterns flicker across sixteen monitors. Through Sept. 15. (Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 12 to 4; Saturdays and Sundays, 12 to 6.)

SHORT LIST—**SETON SMITH,** Cugliani, 508 Greenwich St., at Spring St. (through June 29); **FRED TOMASELLI,** Randy Alexander, 270 Lafayette St. (through June 15).

PHOTOGRAPHY

A SHOW of resonant new works by James Casebere is on display right now at the Klein gallery. The images here are of the artist's own architectural sculptures, displayed both in large black-and-white photographs and on huge light boxes. Casebere has worked in this vein before, with highly original results; his combination of sculpture and photography has none of the didacticism one often finds in multimedia art. The work displays a graceful integration of vocabularies—a delicate juggling of the concrete and the imagined. Although the models themselves are all Casebere's conceptions, they are informed by architectural history; the combination of reality, imagination, and "voice" makes for imagery that has a postmodern poetic sense. People often say of Casebere's work that it triggers memory, and for good reason. In hard-to-pin-down ways, the pieces *do* take you back to wide-ranging past experiences of architecture. But there's a twist on standard nostalgia here, because you land somewhere you've never been before. As Marge Goldwater writes, in a brochure that accompanies the show, these works take us to "a past we continue to invent for ourselves."

"MEAN STREETS"—A small show of American street photography since the nineteen-forties. There are well-known works that exemplify the genre—images by Lisette Model, Robert Frank, Garry Winogrand, and Walker Evans—but there are also wonderful shots by lesser-known photographers. All of the pictures have a cinematic quality, and a gritty dynamic. Leon Levenstein's 1969 photograph of a man on Fifth Avenue is a powerful, growly portrait, and Todd Webb's long horizontal panel capturing a block on Sixth Avenue in 1948 is a fantastic display of street signs and street action. Through July 16. (Museum of Modern Art.)

SHORT LIST—**JAMES CASEBERE,** Klein, 594 Broadway (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through July 6); **ALEXANDRA EDWARDS,** Danziger, 415 West Broadway (through June 8); **SALLY GALL,** Lieberman & Saul, 155 Spring St. (through June 15); **TEUN HOCKS,** P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway (through June 30); **CRAIGIE HORSFIELD,** Gladstone, 99 Greene St. (through June 21); **PAUL ICKOVIC** and **BRIAN WEIL,** International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. (open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8; through July 21); **KOICHIRO KURITA,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. (through June 29); **LOUISE LAWLER,** Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St. (through June 22); **SEBASTIÃO SALGADO,** International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6; through June 11); **THOMAS TULIS,** Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through June 28); **JOEL-PETER WITKIN,** Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (through June 29).

MUSIC

SINCE the Metropolitan Opera season ended, in April, we have been catching up with the Met's previous hundred-odd seasons. There are two new ways to do this. One is to pore over the updated "Annals of the Metropolitan Opera," a work that lists all traceable casts for all known performances since the Met opened, in 1883. All sorts of new information was uncovered in the long preparation of these volumes: there are fuller listings of concert programs (what casual, miscellaneous affairs the old Met's Sunday concerts must have been, but how we would like to hear some of them!); details of tours, run-outs to Brooklyn and Philadelphia, and other "extra" performances not covered in the beloved old "Annals"; statistical summaries of each artist's Met career; and so on. We don't enjoy using the books as much as we had hoped, because they are typographically ugly and ill-arranged (most opera buffs we know have kept the old "Annals" on their shelves for more pleasant quick reference), but we like knowing so much more than we did before about the house's past.

We know more still, though, from David Hamilton's compact-disk series "Great Operas at the Met," which has recently made its way to "Il Barbiere di Siviglia," "Il Trovatore," "Lohengrin," and "Don Giovanni," all in excerpts recorded by singers who appeared in these operas at the Met during various periods in its history. In the past few years—with this and other projects, mostly planned by Mr. Hamilton—the Metropolitan Opera Guild, with its highly focussed sales, has become perhaps the most effective disseminator of historical recordings in the operatic field. We sometimes wonder whether the Met proper might consider this a subversive activity, since the "Great Operas" compilations are constantly juxtaposing people like Ezio Pinza and Giuseppe de Luca with current Met singers for whom the comparison cannot be flattering. But we enjoy the sets tremendously, not just for the wonderful old records but for the sense of how a certain opera has fared in a certain house in a certain city over the years—and for the reminders of distinction that sometimes surfaces in unexpected quarters. Mr. Hamilton's selections have several times proved a corrective to received opinion.

(The box-office number for Avery Fisher Hall is 874-2424; for Alice Tully Hall 362-1911; for Carnegie Hall 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719.)

Josquin Desprez, performed by the Canticum Novum Singers

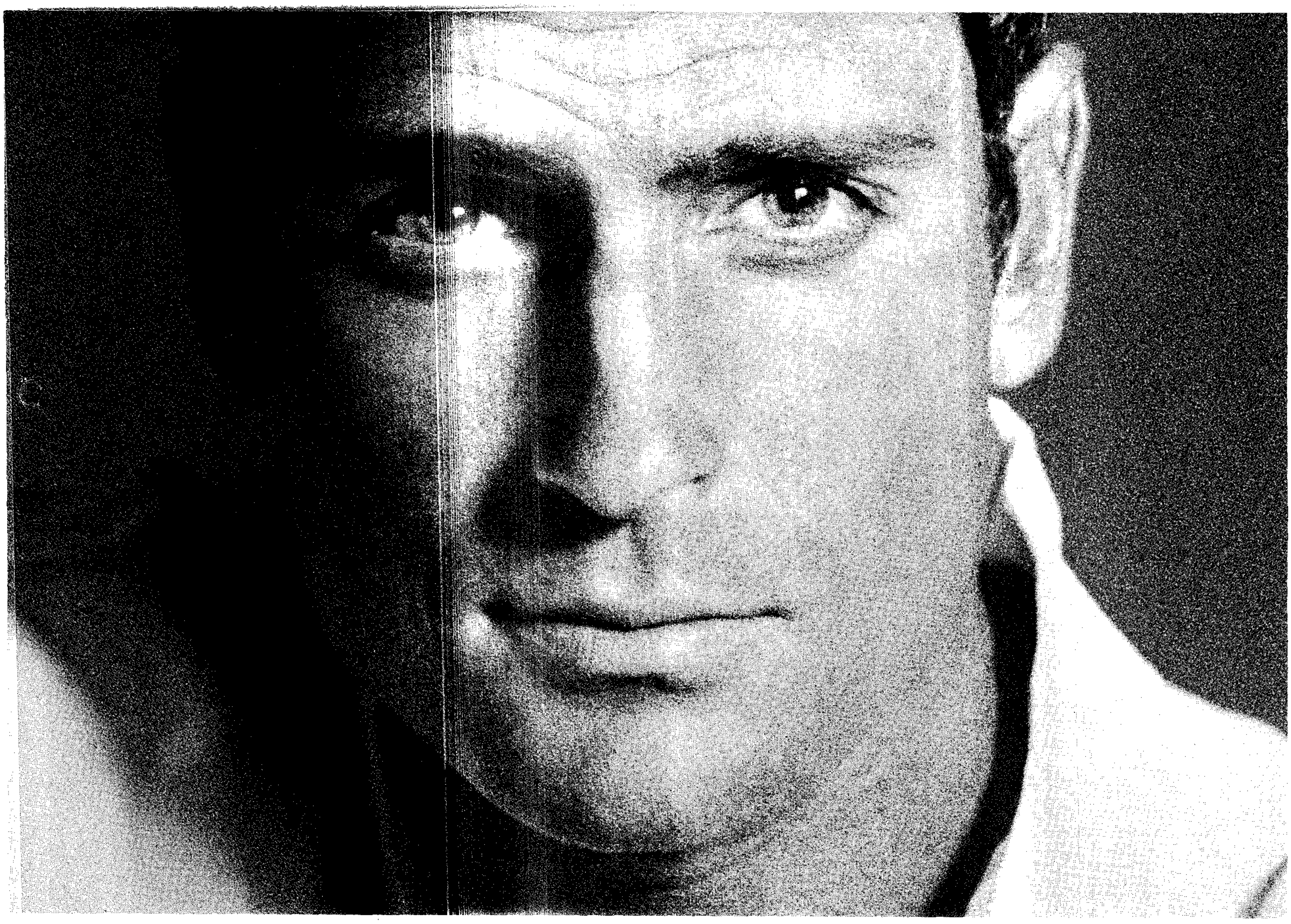
OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA, CONCERT PRODUCTIONS—At the Great Lawn, Central Park. June 11 at 8:30 (rain date, June 13 at 6): An all-Verdi concert, conducted by James Levine, featuring tenor Luciano Pavarotti. In addition to excerpts from "Luisa Miller," "Macbeth," "La Traviata," "Rigoletto," "Nabucco," and the Requiem, the concert will feature a performance of the composer's "Hymn of the Nations." Commissioned for London's International Exhibition of 1862, the "Hymn" comprises not only declamations in which the tenor extols the contributions of various countries to the cause of world brotherhood but also the national anthems of Italy, France, and England, sometimes superimposed over one another in jolly counterpoint. The work is not often performed, though Toscanini did put it to use in the soundtrack for a 1943 propaganda film for the U.S. Office of War Information; at the end of this version (which survives as an independent recording), the conductor reflected the political exigencies of his own time by tacking on "The Star-Spangled Banner" and the "Internationale" (which was then the official anthem of Russia). . . . ¶ June 12 at 8 (rain date, June 13 at 6): "Don Giovanni," with Marilyn Mims, Patricia Schuman, Kaaren Erickson, Donald Kaasch, Thomas Hampson, and Paul Plishka; conducted by Christian Badea.

LATVIAN OPERA CONCERT—Yes, indeed, there is opera in Latvia, and has been since 1772, when a German theatre that included opera among its presentations was established in Riga. No less a figure than Wagner directed that city's operatic productions from 1837 to 1839 (following which he fled, bankrupt, greatly inconvenienced by having had his passport impounded owing to his debts). The first stab at native Latvian opera came in 1890 (it was called "Spoka Stunda," by composer Jekabs Ozols), and the tradition continued through ensuing decades with the works of Alfrēds Kalniņš, the brothers Jānis and Jāzeps Mediņš, Jānis Kalniņš, and Arvids Žilinskis. Excerpts from nine operas by these and other composers, all of whom are virtually unknown in the West, will be served up (in concert versions) by the Latvian State Radio Choir, the New York Latvian Concert Choir, the Bronx Arts Ensemble Orchestra, and Latvian National Opera soloists, including soprano Solveiga Raja, tenor Ingus Petersons, and bass-baritone Pauls Berkods. Andrejs Jansons conducts. (Alice Tully Hall. June 9 at 2:30.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—At Avery Fisher Hall, André Previn conducting. June 4 and June 11 at 7:30; June 6 and June 8 at 8; and June 7 at 2: Berlioz's overture "Le Corsaire" and two symphonies: Brahms' Fourth and Dutilleux's Second. . . . ¶ June 12 at 8: Brahms' "Academic Festival Overture," Mozart's Symphony No. 39, and Mr. Previn's own Piano Concerto, with André Watts as soloist.



WEAR PACO TO BE REMEMBERED.
WHAT IS REMEMBERED IS UP TO YOU.

paco rabanne
pour homme

EAU DE TOILETTE

BLOOMINGDALE'S

paco rabanne

MUSIC—Cont'd

Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra—At Carnegie Hall, Bernard Haitink conducting. June 6 at 8: Symphonies by Haydn (his Ninety-fifth) and Bruckner (his Ninth). . . . ¶ June 7 at 8: Mahler's Sixth Symphony. . . . ¶ June 8 at 8: Mozart's "Le Nozze di Figaro" Overture and Symphony No. 35 (the "Haffner") and Brahms' Symphony No. 2.

Concordia—Marin Alsop conducts the chamber orchestra in a tribute to Leonard Bernstein, including reminiscences from friends, family, and colleagues. The evening's music consists of symphonic suites from "Fancy Free" and "On the Town," as well as a concert version of the seven-scene opera "Trouble in Tahiti," featuring soprano Judy Kaye and baritone William Sharp. (Alice Tully Hall. June 7 at 8.)

New Amsterdam Symphony Orchestra—Robert Black conducts Stravinsky's "The Rite of Spring" and the U.S. première of William Thomas McKinley's "Jubilee Concerto for Brass Quintet and Orchestra." The latter features the Eroica Brass, which will also perform Victor Ewald's Quintet No. 2. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. June 7 at 8.)

Little Orchestra Society—Dino Anagnost conducts seven concertos by Vivaldi, with soloists Ani Kavafian (violin), Lawrence Dutton (viola), Carter Brey (cello), and Kenneth Cooper (harpsichord). (Alice Tully Hall. June 12 at 8.)

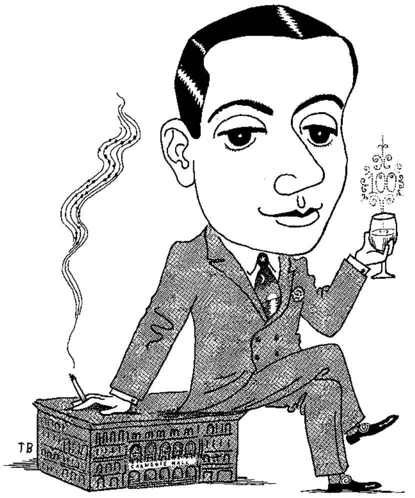
Goodman Chamber Choir—Through its Adopt-an-Émigré program, the choir has established itself as a conduit for professional Soviet choristers beginning new lives in the West. Andrea Goodman directs a benefit concert that, like her choir, brings together Russian and American artistry. Included are works by Mussorgsky, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff, Carter, and Michael Hennagin. (Merkin Concert Hall. June 4 at 8.)

Canticum Novum Singers—Harold Rosenbaum directs works by the towering master of mid-Renaissance music, Josquin Desprez, including motets, chansons, and his "Missa La Sol Fa Re Mi." (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. June 8 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Rottenberg Chorale and Chamber Singers—Elayne Robinson Grossman directs her own Ladino composition "Amen Shem Nora," as well as Jewish liturgical music, Yiddish selections, and contemporary American-Jewish works. (Merkin Concert Hall. June 9 at 7.)

Central City Chorus—Charles Pilling directs the choir and a period-instrument orchestra in a concert version of Purcell's masque "Dioclesian." Soloists include countertenor Jeffrey Dooley and baritone Nathaniel Watson. (Central Presbyterian Church, Park Ave. at 64th St. June 10 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Florilegium Chamber Choir—Jo Ann Rice directs the première of Elie Siegmeister's "Scenes of the Big Town" and selections from his cycle "Madam to You," as well as works by Marc Blitzstein, including his "This Is the Garden (A Cantata of New York)." The Hudson Valley Singers assist in Orlando Gibbons' "Cryes of London" and other pieces. (Merkin Concert Hall. June 12 at 8.)



Cole Porter

RECITALS

Elie Siegmeister—When this New York City-born composer died in March, at the age of eighty-two, he left behind an admiring public and a large corpus of musical works. His music covered a wide terrain, ranging from the early dissonance of "The Strange Funeral in Braddock" (for tenor and piano) to the blues-inspired Clarinet Concerto, the folk-derived opera "The Plough and the Stars," and celebrations of America in general and of his native city in particular (such as the piano solo "Sunday in Brooklyn"). Eleven musicians (soprano Elizabeth Kirkpatrick, clarinettist Stanley Drucker, and pianist Alan Mandel among them) perform these and other pieces in a celebration of Siegmeister's life and work. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. June 3 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Paulo Santiago—In his New York début, the Portuguese pianist performs music by Schumann (his "Scenes from Childhood," Op. 15), Chopin, and Debussy. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. June 4 at 8.)

Michael Dash—Baritone, in his New York recital début, performing songs, scenas, and arias by Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, and Verdi, as well as recent works by Edward Barnes and Chris DeBlasio. With pianist Paul Suits. (Weill Recital Hall. June 5 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Pianist Eduardus Halim performs Liszt's "Reminiscences of Mozart's 'Don Giovanni' "; cellist Jian Wang joins him for Beethoven's "Variations on Mozart's 'Magic Flute' "; and violinist Stephanie Chase joins the team for Mendelssohn's D-Minor Piano Trio. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. June 6-7 at 7:30 and June 9 at 4.)

Lee Hoiby and Friends—The composer-pianist is joined by soprano Amy Burton in a group of his songs, and a chamber group offers trios by Haydn and Schubert. A benefit concert. (Bösendorfer Center, 406 E. 79th St. 472-9799. June 6 at 8.)

Olegna Fuschi—The pianist, who during the past season has directed the Davidsbündler chamber ensemble in exploring the music of the Schumanns and their circle, concludes her series with a solo recital featuring three of Robert Schumann's large-scale piano works from the eighteen-thirties: his first two sonatas and his "Carnaval" cycle. (Alice Tully Hall. June 9 at 8.)

Contemporary Music Ensemble of RAI-Turin—Giampiero Taverna conducts two separate programs of new music from Italy, including works by Berio, Goffredo Petrassi, and Luigi Dallapiccola. (Merkin Concert Hall. June 10-11 at 8:30.) (*)

Mordecai Shehori—Pianist, performing a diverse program that explores musical connections among works by Beethoven (his Sonata, Op. 2, No. 2), Brahms (his Three Intermezzos, Op. 117), Mozart (his B-Minor Adagio and D-Major Rondo), Liszt (the "Rhapsodie Espagnole," as well as his keyboard transcriptions of six songs by Chopin), and others. (Weill Recital Hall. June 12 at 8.)

JAZZ / POP / ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Music by Byrne, Branca, and Cale—A concert presenting premières of orchestral works by three rock artists—or, in the case of Glenn Branca, rock-influenced. David Byrne's "The Forest" was originally composed for a Robert Wilson Gilgamesh-meets-the-Industrial-Revolution theatre piece and is, unabashedly, a pastiche of nineteenth-century romantic and "old-style film music" passages, with some yodelling thrown in for good measure. Branca's "Freeform" and "Shivering Air" and John Cale's "Sanctus" share a minimalist linearity and a Debussyan restlessness. Still, in spite of the presence onstage of the Orchestra of St. Luke's and conductor David Alan Miller (no guitars, no drum kits), you may find yourself expectantly waiting for Roger Daltrey to appear and let out a scream. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. June 8 at 8.) (*)

Styx—Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. June 4-5 at 8.

Manhattan Marimba Quartet—With Michael Pugliese. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. June 7 at 8:30. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Royal New York Doo-Wopp Show—Johnny Maestro and the Brooklyn Bridge, the Spaniels, the Chordettes, and others. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. June 8 at 8.)

"A World of Percussion"—Don Cherry, Glen Velez, Foday Musa Suso, and others. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. June 8 at 8.)

Loren Schoenberg Big Band—St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. June 9 at 7. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.

Cole Porter 100th Birthday Celebration—With Bobby Short, Michael Feinstein, Marilyn Horne, Steve Ross, Lorna Luft, Margaret Whiting, Artie Shaw, and many others. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. June 9 at 7:30.) (*)

"Bali: Cak! and Legong"—Monkey chanting and gamelan music, presented by forty-five performers from Bali. (World Financial Center Plaza, Battery Park City. June 11-12 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.) (*)

Julio Iglesias—Radio City Music Hall. June 11 [illegible] 12 at 8. Through June 22.

Dan Fogelberg—Beacon Theatre. June 12 at 8.

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Mets—Vs. the Atlanta Braves, June 11-13 at 7:40.

Yankees—Vs. the Toronto Blue Jays, June 3-5 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Texas Rangers, June 7-8 at 7:30 and June 9 at 2.

(The Mets play at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499, and the Yankees play at Yankee Stadium, 293-6000.)

RACING

Horses—At Belmont: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1. The Belmont Stakes, the last race in the Triple Crown, is on June 8 at 5:30. . . . **Trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8, and Tuesdays at 1. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30. . . . At Saratoga Raceway, Saratoga Springs: Wednesdays through Saturdays at 7:45.

CHAMPIONSHIP—GOLF

Buick Classic—Formerly called the Westchester Classic, the tournament will be held on June 6-9 at the Westchester Country Club. For information about tickets, call 1-800 765-4742. For armchair viewing, tune in to CBS.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

War and Peace—It's finally here, the day (June 10) of the much-disputed but sure-to-be-breathtaking ticker-tape parade in honor of the Gulf War veterans. The parade starts at 11:30 A.M. at Battery Park and proceeds uptown along Broadway to Worth Street. Doves and other objectors can attend a gathering at the Ethical Culture Society (2 W. 64th St.) on June 9 at 7, to hear stories, songs, talks, and antiwar ruminations. For more information, call 627-7997.

"Immigrant Voices"—A boat ride to Ellis Island and a dramatic presentation with music (and an all-star cast) in the Grand Registry Hall there: these elements make up the evening-long programs that kick off the opening nights of the New York International Festival for the Arts. The evenings' theme is, of course, immigration. (Meets at the Statue of Liberty ferry dock in Battery Park, June 10-11 at 7:15. For information about tickets, call 633-1991.) (*)

Woolf Rap—A three-day conference (June 7-9) at Pace University, in which scholars examine Virginia Woolf in both conventional and unconventional ways. Among the more unconventional presentations are a Virginia Woolf video and a Virginia Woolf musical performance piece. For more information about scheduled events, call 346-1405.

Readings—June 6 at 8: Paul West reads from his new novel. (Endicott Booksellers, 450 Columbus Ave., at 81st St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ June 10 at 8: Ann Beattie reads from "What Was Mine," a new collection of stories. (Three Lives & Co., 154 W. 10th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ June 11 at 8:15: Jamaica Kincaid reads from her own fiction. (Barnard Hall, Barnard College, Broadway at 117th St. No tickets necessary.)

Memoranda—The New York Botanical Garden's Rose Weekend will be June 8-9. . . . ¶ The Puerto Rican Day parade will be held on June 9, starting at noon at Fifth Ave. and 44th St. . . . ¶ "Welcome Back to Brooklyn," an outdoor festival at Grand Army Plaza, will be on June 9, from noon to 5.

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Bottled Ranch Dressing (2 oz.) *(Leading national brand of bottled ranch dressing.)*	
Fat	*32g*
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Cholesterol	*40mg*
Sodium	*560mg*

Ranch Dressing Made With DANNON® PLAIN NONFAT YOGURT (2 oz.)	
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Calories	*84*
Cholesterol	*8mg*
Sodium	*28m*

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Ranch Dressing Made with Dannon® Plain Yogurt

¾ cup of Dannon® Plain Nonfat Yogurt
½ cup of light mayonnaise
2 Tbsp tarragon vinegar
1 Tbsp minced onion
2 Tsp minced fresh parsley
¼ Tsp celery seed
¼ Tsp Dijon mustard
⅛ Tsp garlic powder

Whisk all ingredients together. Chill before serving. Makes 1¼ cups.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 24.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Poison" (directed by Todd Haynes).
Theatre 2: "The Comfort of Strangers" (†).
Theatre 3: "La Femme Nikita" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Ballad of the Sad Café"(†).
Theatre 5: "Drowning by Numbers" (Peter Greenaway).
Theatre 6: "Tatie Danielle" (Etienne Chatiliez, in French), with Tsilla Chelton.

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through June 7: "Gun Crazy" (1949, Joseph H. Lewis), with Peggy Cumming and John Dall; and "Terror in a Texas Town" (1958, Lewis), with Sterling Hayden and Sebastian Cabot.
From June 8: "Strip Jack Naked" (Ron Peck); and "Nighthawks" (1978, Peck).

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Hudson Hawk" (Michael Lehmann), with Bruce Willis.
Theatre 2: (Separate admissions) "Out for Justice" (John Flynn), with Steven Seagal; and "Mannequin Two: On the Move" (Stewart Raffill).
Theatre 3: "FX2—The Deadly Art of Illusion" (†).

Loews Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "Thelma & Louise" (†).
Theatre 2: Through June 6: "Drop Dead Fred" (Ate de Jong), with Phoebe Cates and Rik Mayall. From June 7: "City Slickers" (Ron Underwood), with Billy Crystal, Daniel Stern, and Bruno Kirby.
Theatre 3: "Citizen Kane" (†).
Theatre 4: Through June 6: "Wild Hearts Can't Be Broken" (Steve Miner), with Gabrielle Anwar and Michael Schoeffling. From June 7: "Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead" (Stephen Herek), with Christina Applegate.
Theatre 5: "Truth or Dare" (†).
Theatre 6: "An Angel at My Table" (†).
Theatre 7: "Thelma & Louise" (†).

Cinema Village 12th Street, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
"Eating" (†).

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: Through June 6: "The Killing of a Chinese Bookie" (1976, John Cassavetes), with Ben Gazzara. From June 7: "Faces" (1986, Cassavetes), with John Marley, Gena Rowlands, Lynn Carlin, and Seymour Cassel.
Theatre 2: "The Nasty Girl" (Michael Verhoeven, in German), with Lena Stolze.
Theatre 3: Through June 6: "Straight Out of Brooklyn" (Matty Rich). From June 7: "Delusion"(Carl Colpaert), with Jim Metzler and Jennifer Rubin.
Theatre 4: "Switch" (†).
Theatre 5: "What About Bob?" (Frank Oz), with Bill Murray and Richard Dreyfuss.
Theatre 6: "The Object of Beauty" (†).
Theatre 7: (Matinées only) "The Imported Bridegroom"; and (evenings only) "Dances with Wolves" (†).

Cinema Village 3rd Avenue, between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)
"Noir et Blanc" (Claire Devers).

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Hangin' with the Homeboys" (Joseph Vasquez).
Theatre 2: "Soapdish" (Michael Hoffman), with Sally Field, Kevin Kline, Robert Downey, Jr., Whoopi Goldberg, Cathy Moriarty, and Elisabeth Shue.
Theatre 3: "FX2—The Deadly Art of Illusion" (†).
Theatre 4: "Hudson Hawk" (Michael Lehmann), with Bruce Willis.
Theatre 5: "Soapdish" (Michael Hoffman), with Sally Field, Kevin Kline, Robert Downey, Jr., Whoopi Goldberg, Cathy Moriarty, and Elisabeth Shue.
Theatre 6: "The Silence of the Lambs" (†).

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
(Matinées only) "Wild Hearts Can't Be Broken" (Steve Miner), with Gabrielle Anwar and Michael Schoeffling; and (evenings only) "A Rage in Harlem" (†).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Only the Lonely" (Chris Columbus), with John Candy, Maureen O'Hara, and Ally Sheedy.

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "What About Bob?" (Frank Oz), with Bill Murray and Richard Dreyfuss.
Theatre 2: Through June 6: "Ambition" (Scott D. Goldstein), with Lou Diamond Phillips and Clancy Brown. From June 7: "Jungle Fever" (Spike Lee), with Wesley Snipes and Annabella Sciorra.
Theatre 3: Through June 6: "Switch" (†). From June 7: "Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead" (Stephen Herek), with Christina Applegate.
Theatre 4: "Truth or Dare" (†).

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Soapdish" (Michael Hoffman), with Sally Field, Kevin Kline, Robert Downey, Jr., Whoopi Goldberg, Cathy Moriarty, and Elisabeth Shue.
Theatre 2: Through June 6: "FX2—The Deadly Art of Illusion" (†). From June 7: "City Slickers" (Ron Underwood), with Billy Crystal, Daniel Stern, and Bruno Kirby.
Theatre 3: "Thelma & Louise" (†).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Backdraft" (Ron Howard), with Kurt Russell and William Baldwin.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Truth or Dare" (†).

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "Ambition" (Scott D. Goldstein), with Lou Diamond Phillips and Clancy Brown.
Theatre 2: "Switch" (†).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Mannequin Two: On the Move" (Stewart Raffill).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Straight Out of Brooklyn" (Matty Rich).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: Through June 6: "Dances with Wolves" (†). From June 7: "Jungle Fever" (Spike Lee), with Wesley Snipes and Annabella Sciorra.
Theatre 2: "FX2—The Deadly Art of Illusion" (†).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Impromptu" (†).

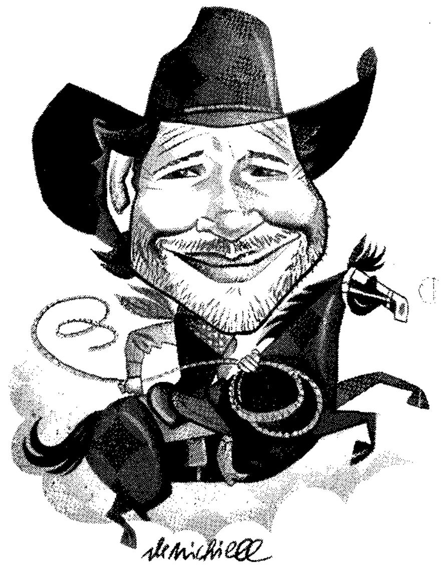
Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Backdraft" (Ron Howard), with Kurt Russell and William Baldwin.
Theatre 2: "Backdraft."

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "What About Bob?" (Frank Oz), with Bill Murray and Richard Dreyfuss.
Theatre 2: Through June 6: "Love Without Pity" (Eric Rochant, in French). From June 7: "Dark Obsession" (Nicholas Broomfield), with Gabriel Byrne.
Theatre 3: (Matinées only) "Wild Hearts Can't Be Broken" (Steve Miner), with Gabrielle Anwar and Michael Schoeffling; and (evenings only) "Defending Your Life" (†).

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: Through June 6: "Drop Dead Fred" (Ate de Jong), with Phoebe Cates and Rik Mayall. From June 7: "Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead" (Stephen Herek), with Christina Applegate.
Theatre 2: "Hudson Hawk" (Michael Lehmann), with Bruce Willis.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Only the Lonely" (Chris Columbus), with John Candy, Maureen O'Hara, and Ally Sheedy.

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Thelma & Louise" (†).



Billy Crystal in "City Slickers"

Theatre 2: Through June 6: "Hangin' with the Homeboys" (Joseph Vasquez). From June 7: "City Slickers" (Ron Underwood), with Billy Crystal, Daniel Stern, and Bruno Kirby.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"The Nasty Girl" (Michael Verhoeven, in German), with Lena Stolze.

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Soapdish" (Michael Hoffman), with Sally Field, Kevin Kline, Robert Downey, Jr., Whoopi Goldberg, Cathy Moriarty, and Elisabeth Shue.

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Hudson Hawk" (Michael Lehmann), with Bruce Willis.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: Through June 6: "Ambition" (Scott D. Goldstein), with Lou Diamond Phillips and Clancy Brown. From June 7: "Jungle Fever" (Spike Lee), with Wesley Snipes and Annabella Sciorra.
Theatre 2: "Backdraft" (Ron Howard), with Kurt Russell and William Baldwin.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Switch" (†).
Theatre 2: "What About Bob?" (Frank Oz), with Bill Murray and Richard Dreyfuss.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: Through June 4: "The Wonderful World of Dogs" (directed by Mark Lewis) and "A Little Vicious" (Immy Humes). From June 5: "Begotten" (1989, E. Elias Merhige).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "Paris Is Burning" (†).

Bleecker Movie House, 144 Bleecker St. (807-9205)
Theatre 1: "Termini Station" (Allan King), with Colleen Dewhurst and Megan Follows.
Theatre 2: (Separate admissions) "Herdsmen of the Sun" (1988, Werner Herzog); and "Les Maîtres Fou" (Jean Rouch).

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Backdraft" (Ron Howard), with Kurt Russell and William Baldwin.
Theatre 2: "Impromptu" (†).

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
"Ambition" (Scott D. Goldstein), with Lou Diamond Phillips and Clancy Brown.

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Soapdish" (Michael Hoffman), with Sally Field, Kevin Kline, Robert Downey, Jr., Whoopi Goldberg, Cathy Moriarty, and Elisabeth Shue.
Theatre 2: Through June 6: "Only the Lonely" (Chris Columbus), with John Candy, Maureen O'Hara, and Ally Sheedy. From June 7: "Jungle Fever" (Spike Lee), with Wesley Snipes and Annabella Sciorra.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Cyrano de Bergerac" (Jean-Paul

Rappeneau, in French), with Gérard Depardieu.

Theatre 2: "Daddy Nostalgia" (Bertrand Tavernier, in English and French), with Dirk Bogarde and Jane Birkin.

Theatre 3: "Alice" (†).

Theatre 4: "The Silence of the Lambs" (†).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)

Theatre 1: Through June 6: "A Kiss Before Dying" (†). From June 7: "City Slickers" (Ron Underwood), with Billy Crystal, Daniel Stern, and Bruno Kirby.

Theatre 2: "Truth or Dare" (†).

Theatre 3: Through June 6: "Switch" (†). From June 7: "Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead" (Stephen Herek).

Theatre 4: Through June 6: "Drop Dead Fred" (Ate de Jong), with Phoebe Cates and Rik Mayall. From June 7: "Jungle Fever" (Spike Lee), with Wesley Snipes and Annabella Sciorra.

Theatre 5: "Truth or Dare" (†).

Theatre 6: "Only the Lonely" (Chris Columbus), with John Candy, Maureen O'Hara, and Ally Sheedy.

Theatre 7: "Impromptu" (†).

Theatre 8: "Backdraft" (Ron Howard), with Kurt Russell and William Baldwin.

Theatre 9: "Backdraft."

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)

Theatre 1: "Mortal Thoughts" (Alan Rudolph), with Demi Moore and Glenne Headly.

Theatre 2: "Ambition" (Scott D. Goldstein), with Lou Diamond Phillips and Clancy Brown.

Theatre 3: "What About Bob?" (Frank Oz), with Bill Murray and Richard Dreyfuss.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)

"Thelma & Louise" (†).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)

Theatre 1: "Truly, Madly, Deeply" (†).

Theatre 2: "The Object of Beauty" (†).

Theatre 3: Through June 6: "Mortal Thoughts" (Alan Rudolph), with Demi Moore and Glenne Headly. From June 7: "Jungle Fever" (Spike Lee), with Wesley Snipes and Annabella Sciorra.

Theatre 4: "The Nasty Girl" (Michael Verhoeven), with Lena Stolze.

Theatre 5: "Spartacus" (†).

Theatre 6: "Impromptu" (†).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)

"Backdraft" (Ron Howard), with Kurt Russell and William Baldwin.

Loews Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)

"Citizen Kane" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)

Through June 6: "Daddy Nostalgia" (Bertrand Tavernier, in English and French), with Dirk Bogarde and Jane Birkin.

From June 7: "The Phantom of the Opera" (Darwin Knight), with David Staller.

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)

Theatre 1: "Tatie Danielle" (Etienne Chatiliez, in French), with Tsilla Chelton.

Theatre 2: "La Femme Nikita" (†).

Loews Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)

"An Angel at My Table" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)

"Truly, Madly, Deeply" (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)

"Soapdish" (Michael Hoffman), with Sally Field, Kevin Kline, Robert Downey, Jr., Whoopi Goldberg, Cathy Moriarty, and Elisabeth Shue.

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)

"Only the Lonely" (Chris Columbus), with John Candy, Maureen O'Hara, and Ally Sheedy.

Lincoln Plaza I, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)

Theatre 1: "Everybody's Fine" (Giuseppe Tornatore, in Italian), with Marcello Mastroianni.

Theatre 2: "Everybody's Fine."

Theatre 3: "Ju Dou" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)

"Drop Dead Fred" (Ate de Jong), with Phoebe Cates and Rik Mayall.

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)

Theatre 1: "Truth or Dare" (†).

Theatre 2: "Hudson Hawk" (Michael Lehmann), with Bruce Willis.

Theatre 3: "Thelma & Louise" (†).

Theatre 4: "What About Bob?" (Frank Oz), with Bill Murray and Richard Dreyfuss.

Theatre 5: Through June 6: "Switch" (†). From June 7: "City Slickers" (Ron Underwood), with Billy Crystal, Daniel Stern, and Bruno Kirby.

Theatre 6: Through June 6: "FX2—The Deadly Art of Illusion" (†). From June 7: "Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead" (Stephen Herek), with Christina Applegate.

Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)

Theatre 1: "Impromptu" (†).

Theatre 2: Through June 6: "Straight Out of Brooklyn" (Matty Rich). From June 7: "Jungle Fever" (Spike Lee), with Wesley Snipes and Annabella Sciorra.

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)

Theatre 1: "Backdraft" (Ron Howard), with Kurt Russell and William Baldwin.

Theatre 2: "A Rage in Harlem" (†).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)

Theatre 1: "Drop Dead Fred" (directed by Ate de Jong), with Phoebe Cates and Rik Mayall.

Theatre 2: "Hudson Hawk" (Michael Lehmann), with Bruce Willis.

Theatre 3: "Dances with Wolves" (†).

Theatre 4: "Out for Justice" (John Flynn), with Steven Seagal.

Theatre 5: "Dice Rules" (Jay Dubin), Andrew Dice Clay in concert.

Theatre 6: "Only the Lonely" (Chris Columbus), with John Candy, Maureen O'Hara, and Ally Sheedy.

Embassy I, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)

"What About Bob?" (Frank Oz), with Bill Murray and Richard Dreyfuss.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)

Theatre 1: "FX2—The Deadly Art of Illusion" (†).

Theatre 2: "Wild Hearts Can't Be Broken" (Steve Miner), with Gabrielle Anwar and Michael Schoeffling.

Theatre 3: "The Silence of the Lambs" (†).

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)

Through June 5: "A Rage in Harlem" (†).

June 6: Theatre closed.

From June 7: "City Slickers" (Ron Underwood), with Billy Crystal, Daniel Stern, and Bruno Kirby.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)

Theatre 1: Through June 6: "Stone Cold" (Craig R. Baxley), with Brian Bosworth. From June 7: "Jungle Fever" (Spike Lee), with Wesley Snipes and Annabella Sciorra.

Theatre 2: "A Kiss Before Dying" (†).

West Side Cinema I and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)

Theatre 1: Through June 6: "Ambition" (Scott D. Goldstein), with Lou Diamond Phillips and Clancy Brown. From June 7: "Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead" (Stephen Herek), with Christina Applegate.

Theatre 2: "Switch" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)

Through June 3: "Mrs. Parkington" (1944, directed by Tay Garnett), with Greer Garson, Walter Pidgeon, Agnes Moorehead, and Edward Arnold; and "Daisy Kenyon" (1947, Otto Preminger), with Joan Crawford, Dana Andrews, and Henry Fonda.

June 4-6: "West Side Story" (1961, Robert Wise), with Natalie Wood, Richard Beymer, Russ Tamblyn, Rita Moreno, and George Chakiris.

From June 7: The 1991 New York International Festival of Lesbian and Gay Film.

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)

June 3: "Some Like It Hot" (1959, Billy Wilder), with Marilyn Monroe, Tony Curtis, Jack Lemmon, Pat O'Brien, Joe E. Brown, and George Raft; and "The Seven Year Itch" (1955, Wilder), with Monroe, Tom Ewell, Victor Moore, Evelyn Keyes, and Sonny Tufts.

June 4: "Emil and the Detectives" (1931, Gerhard Lamprecht; in German, with English translation); and "Der Teufelsreporter" (1929, Ernst Laemmle).

June 5: "Rhythm on the River" (1940, Victor Schertzinger), with Bing Crosby and Mary Martin; and "What a Life" (1939, Theodore Reed), with Jackie Cooper, Eddie Bracken, and Betty Field.

June 6: "The Spirit of St. Louis" (1957, Billy Wilder), with James Stewart, Murray Hamilton, and Patricia Smith.

June 7-10: "The Apartment" (1960, Billy Wilder), with Jack Lemmon, Shirley MacLaine, and Fred MacMurray; and "Irma la Douce" (†).

June 11: "Fedora" (1979, Billy Wilder), with William Holden, Marthe Keller, and Hildegard Knef; and "Avanti!" (1972, Wilder), with Jack Lemmon and Juliet Mills.

From June 12: "Witness for the Prosecution" (1958, Billy Wilder), with Tyrone Power, Marlene Dietrich, Charles Laughton, Elsa Lanchester, and Una O'Connor; and "The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes" (†).

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

June 3: "The Rules of the Game" (1939, Jean Renoir; in French), with Marcel Dalio and Nora Gregor; and "Pépé le Moko" (1937, Julien Duvivier; in French), with Jean Gabin, Mireille Balin, and Marcel Dalio.

June 4: "Suddenly, Last Summer" (1959, Joseph L. Mankiewicz), with Elizabeth Taylor, Montgomery Clift, and Katharine Hepburn; and "Holiday" (1938, George Cukor), with Hepburn, Cary Grant, Lew Ayres, and Doris Nolan.

June 5: "Gothic" (1986, Ken Russell), with Gabriel Byrne, Julian Sands, and Natasha Richardson; and "The Devils" (1971, Russell), with Oliver Reed and Vanessa Redgrave.

June 6: "Pandora's Box" (1928, G. W. Pabst; a German silent film), with Louise Brooks, Fritz Kortner, Francis Lederer, and Alice Roberts; and "Diary of a Lost Girl" (1929, Pabst; a German silent film), with Brooks.

June 7-8: "The 39 Steps" (1935, Alfred Hitchcock), with Madeleine Carroll, Robert Donet, Godfrey Tearle, Peggy Ashcroft, and John Laurie; and "The Lady Vanishes" (1938, Hitchcock), with Dame May Whitty, Margaret Lockwood, and Michael Redgrave.

June 9: "Doctor Zhivago" (†).

June 10: "Les Enfants Terribles" ("The Strange Ones"; 1949, Jean-Pierre Melville; in French), with Nicole Stéphane and Edouard Dermithe; and "La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret" (1970, Georges Franju; in French).

June 11: "Diamonds Are Forever" (1971, Guy Hamilton), with Sean Connery as James Bond; and "You Only Live Twice" (†).

June 12: "Odd Man Out" (1946, Carol Reed), with James Mason, Robert Newton, and Kathleen Ryan; and "Outcast of the Islands" (1952, Reed), with Trevor Howard, Ralph Richardson, Robert Morley, and Wendy Hiller.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—June 3 at 3: "The Woman on the Beach" (1947, directed by Jean Renoir), with Joan Bennett, Robert Ryan, and Charles Bickford. . . . ¶ June 3 at 6:30: "January Journal" (1985) and "Winter Wheat" (1989), both by Mark Street, who will be present. . . . ¶ June 4 at 3: "A Woman of Kinhu" (1973, in Estonian, with no English subtitles) and "A Man of Kinhu" (1986, in Estonian), both by Mark Soosaar. . . . ¶ June 4 at 5: "State Elder" (1991, Soosaar; in Estonian). . . . ¶ June 6 at 3 and 6: "The Rebuilding of Mascot Flats" (1990, Josephine Hayes Dean), a documentary. . . . ¶ June 7 at 3, June 8 at 2:30 and 5, and June 9 at 5: Four different programs of short films made at Film Arts Foundation, San Francisco. . . . ¶ June 7 at 6: "Isadora Duncan: Movement from the Soul" (1988, Daniel Geller and Dayna Goldfine). . . . ¶ June 9 at 2:30: "In the Shadow of the Stars" (1990, Irving Saraf and Aliue Light). . . . ¶ June 10 at 3: "Where the Heart Roams" (1987, George Csicsery). . . . ¶ June 11 at 3: A program of films by Scott Bartlett. . . . ¶ June 11 at 6: "Shuttlecock" (1989, Jerry Barrish).

Anthology Film Archives, 32-34 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (477-2714)—June 5-8 at 7: "Wedding Guests" (1990, Niko Brücher). . . . ¶ June 5 at 8: "Ivan the Terrible, Parts I and II" (1944-46, Sergei Eisenstein; in Russian). . . . ¶ June 6-8 at 8: Three different programs of films by Michel Auder. . . . ¶ June 6 at 10: "Tristana" (1970, Luis Buñuel; in Spanish), with Catherine Deneuve. . . . ¶ June 7-8 at 9:30 and June 9 at 8: "Balls on the Line—Hommage à Joseph Beuys" (1976), "Berlin Graffity Sex Pistols" (1978), and "Kiss Napoleon Goodbye" (1990). . . . ¶ June 9 at 6: "La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc" (1928, Carl Theodor Dreyer; a French silent film). . . . ¶ June 12 at 6:30 and 9:30: "Vampyr" (†). . . . ¶ June 12 at 8: "To Lavoisier, Who Died in the Reign of Terror" (1991, Michael Snow).

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—June 7-9 at 2 and June 11 at

MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

6:15: "Book of Days" (1989, Meredith Monk).

Museum of Television and Radio, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—"On Stage at Carnegie Hall: A Centennial Celebration." June 4-8: "Playing to Win" (1982, Bravo), the 1981 International Music Competition for Pianists; and "Carnegie Finals: The International American Music Competition for Pianists" (1982, Bravo). . . . From June 11: "An Evening with Alan King at Carnegie Hall" (1987, HBO) and "The 22nd Annual Emmy Awards" (1970, ABC). Showings Tuesdays at 2:30 and 5:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 2:30. . . . ¶ "A Salute to Monty Python." From June 4: "Monty Python's Fliegende Zirkus" (1973, WDR), the English-language special produced for German television. Showings Tuesdays at 12:15, 2:30, and 5:30; Wednesdays through Fridays at 12:15 and 2:30; and Saturdays at 12:15.

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—June 5 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Baxter" (1988, Jérôme Boivin; in French), with Lise Delamare, Jean Mercure, Jacques Spiesser, and Evelyne Didi.

Donnell Library Center, 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619)—June 4 at noon: "Breathless" (1959, Jean-Luc Godard), with Jean Seberg and Jean-Paul Belmondo. . . . ¶ June 4 at 2:30: "Born Free" (1965, James Hill), with Virginia McKenna and Bill Travers. . . . ¶ June 6 at noon: "Pandora's Box" (1928, G. W. Pabst; a German silent film), with Louise Brooks, Fritz Kortner, Francis Lederer, and Alice Roberts. . . . ¶ June 11 at noon: "The Misfits" (1960, John Huston), with Marilyn Monroe, Clark Gable, and Montgomery Clift. . . . ¶ June 11 at 2:30: "Flipper" (1963, James B. Clarke), with Chuck Connors and Luke Halpin.

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. (752-3015)—June 3 at 6:30: "The Dancer" (1989, Masahiro Shinoda; in Japanese), with Hiromi Go and Lisa Wolf. . . . ¶ June 7 at 6:30: "Bwana Toshi" (1965, Susumu Hani; in Japanese), with Kiyoshi Atsumi.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

Alice—Woody Allen's latest picture is an awkward blend of whimsy and moralizing. The title character, played by Mia Farrow, is a pampered Upper East Side lady-who-lunches. She lives in a huge apartment with her handsome husband (William Hurt), her adorable children, and a staff, and she looks terrific. But her life, the movie tells us, is totally empty and false. A Chinatown doctor (Keye Luke) gives her a variety of herbal remedies to knock the yuppie malaise out of her system. One of them makes her invisible; one makes her irresistible to men; and so on. As these fantasy episodes mount up, Alice begins to see how artificial her life is, how far she's strayed from the pure ideals of her Catholic girlhood, how much more love she needs than she has been getting, and what a revolting piece of Wasp slime her husband is. In the end, the heroine seems, incredibly, to have redeemed herself through self-absorption; the movie doesn't benefit from any such miracle. Although there are more jokes here than in any of Allen's last few features, the picture isn't really a comedy; it's a sermon with gags. The large cast also includes Joe Mantegna, Alec Baldwin, Blythe Danner, Judy Davis, Bob Balaban, and Bernadette Peters (who does a sensational brief turn as a cynical muse).—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/31/90.) (Quad Cinema.)

An Angel at My Table—Based on the autobiography of the New Zealand novelist and poet Janet Frame. The film covers the first forty years or so of the writer's life—she was born in 1924—and takes close to three hours to tell the story. When it's all over, you feel that you know far too little about Janet Frame and far too much about the film's director, Jane Campion. The movie (which was made as a three-part miniseries for Australian television) is a succession of odd, mannered tableaux, more or less in the style of Campion's 1990 art-house hit, "Sweetie." The compositions emphasize the peculiarities of Janet's appearance, especially in her childhood and awkward adolescence: she has a stiff, frizzy mop of bright-orange hair, and her teeth are badly decayed. The Janet Frame we see in this film doesn't seem to have an inner life, and without that she has no life at all. Even the most dramatic events in her life are treated so flatly and elliptically that we're unable to respond; time after time, we find that we can't orient ourselves in crucial scenes, because the director hasn't bothered to establish the characters or the setting. Writers' lives are weird enough without being subjected to this sort of willful disruption of their emotional continuity. Campion's perverse exercise in biographical filmmaking deserves a new title: "My Incomprehensible Career." Janet is played by three actresses: as a child, by Alexia Keogh; as a young teenager, by Karen Fergusson; and, as an adult, by Kerry Fox. Screenplay by Laura Jones.—T.R. (6/3/91) (Loews Village Theatre VII, and Loews Fine Arts.)

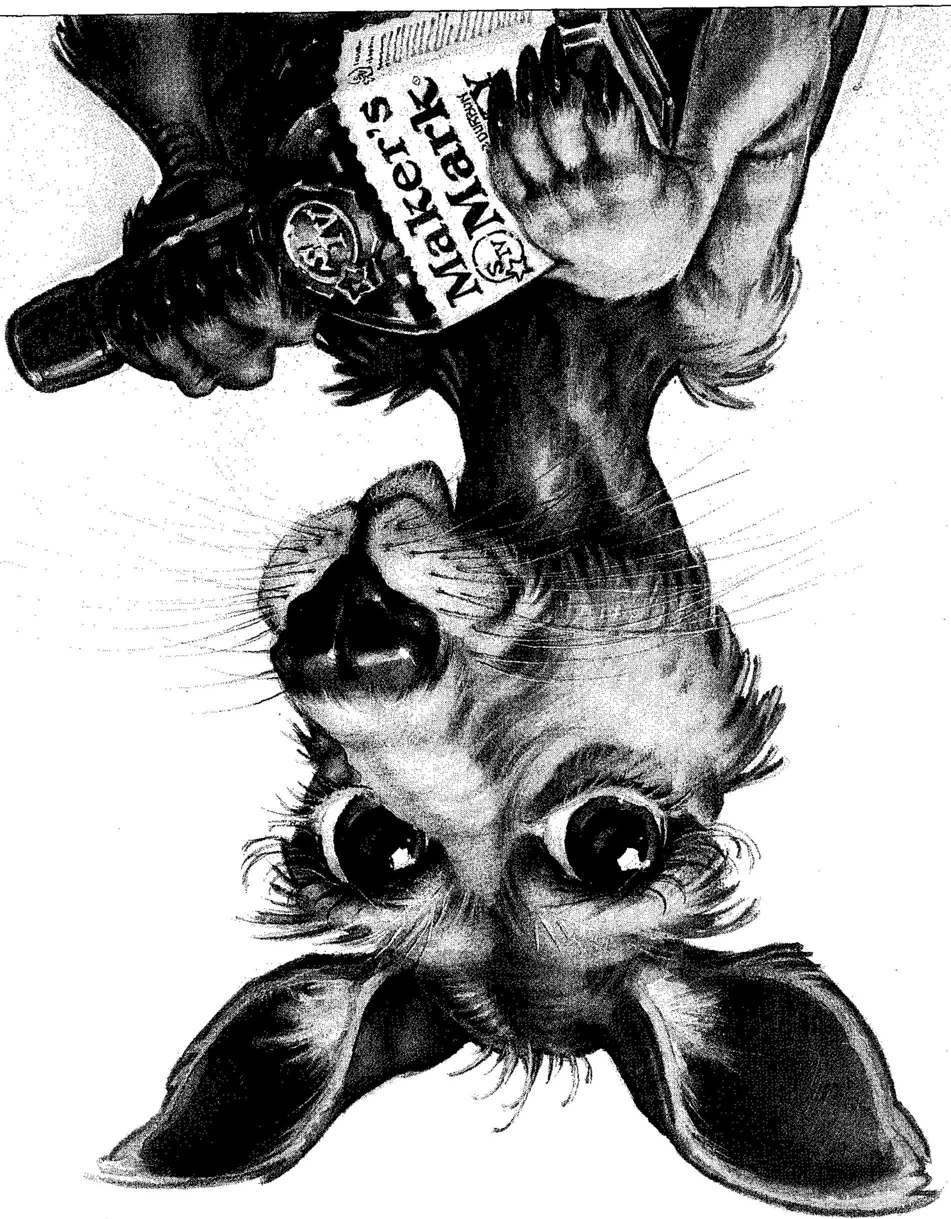
The Ballad of the Sad Café—An adaptation, directed by Simon Callow, of Carson McCullers' fable about unhappy love in a tiny Deep South mill town. The story describes a perfect circle of unrequited love among its three main characters: Miss Amelia Evans (Vanessa Redgrave), a tall, awkward woman who is the town's wealthiest resident and its most forbidding eccentric; her cousin Lymon (Cort Hubbert), a hunchbacked dwarf; and a mean cracker named Marvin Macy (Keith Carradine), who was once, briefly, Amelia's husband. Callow and the screenwriter, Michael Hirst, have adapted the story very faithfully, but they've missed its elusive, slyly comic voice. The narrative unfolds in a solemn, glum, stately manner—more like a Biblical parable than like a crazy backwoods folktale. The filmmakers seem to have been deceived by the apparent simplicity of McCullers' style—its fablelike directness and its bedtime-story intimacy of tone. They aim for a kind of mythic purity that's almost impossible to achieve in the movies. Despite the heroic efforts of Redgrave and Carradine, the characters in this picture don't seem quite human, and the stylized dialogue, much of it lifted outright from McCullers, doesn't have the poetic force that the filmmakers must have hoped it would have; everyone in the movie just sounds simpleminded. This picture is a brave undertaking, and it is clearly a labor of love, but it's doomed. Like all the strange loves of McCullers' story, it does not have a fortunate outcome: its object remains alone, untouched—impervious to the tenderest attentions. Also with Rod Steiger, Lanny Flaherty, and Earl Hindman.—T.R. (5/20/91) (Angelika Film Center.)

Citizen Kane (1941)—The Orson Welles film is generally considered the greatest American film of the sound period, and it may be more fun than any other great movie. Based on the life of William Randolph Hearst, it's an exuberant, muckraking attack on an archetypal economic baron. With Welles, of course, and Joseph Cotten, Dorothy Comingore, Agnes Moorehead, Everett Sloane, George Coulouris, Ruth Warrick, Ray Collins, Erskine Sanford, William Alland, Paul Stewart, Fortunio Bonanova, Gus Schilling, and Philip Van Zandt. Screenplay by Herman J. Mankiewicz and Welles; cinematography by Gregg Toland; editing by Robert Wise and Mark Robson; music by Bernard Herrmann; art direction by Van Nest Polglase and Perry Ferguson.—P.K. (Loews Village Theatre VII, and Loews Festival.)

The Comfort of Strangers—Harold Pinter's screenplay, adapted from a novel by Ian McEwan, is a kinky contemporary variation on the sort of plot that made Victorian readers shiver—the story of innocents lured into the clutches of charming villains. The innocents here are an unmarried English couple (Natasha Richardson and Rupert Everett) vacationing in Venice; the evil seducers are a husband and wife (Christopher Walken and Helen Mirren) whose tastes run to voyeurism and sadomasochism; the dread lair in which the monsters toy with their prey is a huge, ornately furnished apartment with a spectacular view of the city. The director, Paul Schrader, dresses his characters in Armani and sets the camera in motion to swirl gracefully around them, picking up miragelike shimmers from the canals and beautiful but ominous architectural details; the languorous camera movements create an authentically gothic sense of catastrophe just around the corner. Walken glides effortlessly through his role as the embodiment of Old World evil. He gives the character a lordly, sinister air, and suggests, as well, that he's wearing something really odd underneath his superbly tailored white suits. And Richardson is characteristically amazing: she brings a touch of humanity to this rather formal party. The movie improves on the novel by jettisoning its dubious psychology and its pretensions to literary significance. Schrader treats the story as an elegant horror-movie game, a trick done with mirrors, and he carries it off. Dante Spinotti's cinematography and Gianni Quaranta's production design contribute to the luxurious, decadent atmosphere. Music by Angelo Badalamenti.—T.R. (4/8/91) (Angelika Film Center.)

Dances with Wolves—Set during the Civil War, this big Indians-versus-Cavalry epic is like a New Age social-studies lesson. Kevin Costner, who directed and is the star, has an untroubled face and laid-back diction. As Lieutenant Dunbar, a Union officer, he sees that the Sioux have a superior culture and he changes sides. This is a nature-boy movie, a kid's daydream of being an Indian. When Dunbar has become a Sioux named Dances with Wolves, he writes in his journal that he knows for the first time who he really is. Costner has feathers in his hair and feathers in his head. He and his friend Michael Blake (who worked up the material with him in mind and then wrote the novel and the screenplay) are trying to show the last years of the Sioux as an independent nation from the Sioux point of view, and it's probably that sympathy for the Indians that the audience responds to. But Costner is a moviemaking novice: instead of helping us understand the Sioux, he simply makes the Sioux like genial versions of us. This three-hour Western weeper, with its sluggish action and poorly shaped scenes, was made by a bland megalomaniac. (The Indians should have named him Plays with Camera.) Shot in South Dakota; the wide-screen cinematography, by Dean Semler, is spacious and open at times, and there are fine images of buffalo pounding by. With Mary McDonnell, Graham Greene as Kicking Bird, and Rodney A. Grant as Wind in His Hair.—P.K. (12/17/90) (Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Village East Cinemas. Evenings only. . . . ¶ Manhattan Twin; through June 6.)

Defending Your Life—The setting of Albert Brooks' disappointing new comedy is a place called Judgment City, which, according to this picture, is where people from Southern California go after death. Here recently completed lives are examined and evaluated, in a formal proceeding something like a trial: if the defendant wins the case, he moves up the cosmic ladder to a higher form of consciousness. The hero, Daniel Miller (Brooks), a yuppie adman who met his untimely end in a brand-new BMW, naturally believes in upward mobility; in death, as in life, he wants to impress the higher-ups and get that promotion. Although this sounds like an ideal setup for Brooks' kind of comedy, the film is mild-mannered and blandly whimsical, and its rhythms are sluggish. The humor doesn't have any satiric edge, because the character Brooks has written for himself isn't the egotistical, grotesquely needy baby boomer he played in his three previous movies. Brooks is celebrating qualities he used to satirize, and there's something smarmy about his attempt to turn himself into a lovable schlemiel—to cast a warmer, more flattering light on the self that his other pictures mercilessly exposed. Also with Meryl Streep, Lee Grant, and, as the hero's lawyer, Rip Torn, who periodically energizes the movie with some lunatic courtroom theatricality.—T.R. (4/22/91) (Cinema 3rd Avenue. Evenings only.)



“Remember me??
I've written you two letters in the past. One about finding Maker's Mark for the first time in Oregon and the second about finding your whisky in California. (I must have searched all over. And it's an even bigger state than Oregon.)

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IN BRIEF–Cont'd

Doctor Zhivago (1965)—The pure-souled poet-doctor Zhivago (Omar Sharif, with wet, dark eyes) is at the center of the scenarist Robert Bolt's poetic enigma, and the director David Lean surrounds him with enormous historical reconstructions of the Russian Revolution. Neither the contemplative Zhivago nor the flux of events is intelligible, and, what is worse, they seem unrelated to each other. (It's hard to know what kind of hero or even what kind of group of people *could* hold these events together.) And in this movie, so full of "realism," nothing really grows—not the performances, not the ideas, not even the daffodils, which are also so "real" that they have obviously been planted for us, just as the buildings have been built for us. After the first half hour you don't expect the picture to breathe and live; you just sit there. It isn't shoddy (except for the balalaika music, which is so repetitive you could kill the composer); it's stately, respectable, and dead. Though not in itself a disgraceful failure, it does have one disgraceful effect: the final shot of a rainbow over the huge dam where Zhivago's lost daughter is working. This banal suggestion that the suffering has all been for the best and that tomorrow will be brighter is not only an insult to the audience, it is a coarse gesture of condescension and appeasement to the Russians. Would Lean and Bolt place a rainbow over the future of England? With Julie Christie, who does have some life as Lara, and Rod Steiger, who brings something powerful, many-sided, and sexual to the role of Komarovsky, and Geraldine Chaplin, Alec Guinness, Tom Courtenay, Siobhan McKenna, Jack MacGowran, Rita Tushingham, Ralph Richardson, Adrienne Corri, Geoffrey Keen, Noel Willman, and Klaus Kinski, with his eyes popping and huge veins bulging out of his forehead, as the nihilist who declares, "I am the only free man on this train." From the novel by Boris Pasternak; cinematography by Freddie Young; production design by the aptly named John Box. (193 minutes.) —P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; June 9.)

Geena Davis and Susan Sarandon in "Thelma & Louise"

Eating—All the action in Henry Jaglom's film takes place at the fortieth-birthday party of a Southern California woman named Helene (Lisa Richards), and all the characters—thirty-eight of them—are women. None of the women at this party—with the exception of Helene's mother (Frances Bergen), who represents the values of an older generation—can eat without guilt; several of them have clinical eating disorders, for which they hate themselves. Jaglom films them in his usual group-therapy style: the camera remains fixed as characters lob banal confessions and accusations at each other. This is meant to create the illusion of raw emotional truth, but the bulimics' ball Jaglom throws here isn't much of a party, and it's bad therapy, too. The big naked truth that pops out of the cake is: women are so obsessed with their bodies that they're incapable of enjoying even the simple pleasure of eating. Whatever Jaglom may have intended, his film winds up trivializing its theme and humiliating its subjects. He's advertising the movie as "A Very Serious Comedy About Women and Food," but its "serious" message is glibly offensive, and there's nothing funny about it. Also with Gwen Welles, Mary Crosby, Nelly Alard, Marlena Giovi, and Daphna Kastner. —T.R. (5/20/91) (Cinema Village 12th Street.)

La Femme Nikita—The end of French cinema as we know it. Written and directed by Luc Besson. With Anne Parillaud, Jean-Hugues Anglade, Tcheky Karyo, and (in a cameo) Jeanne Moreau. In French.—T.R. (Angelika Film Center, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

FX2—The Deadly Art of Illusion—This sequel cuts its best caper early. Rollie Tyler (Bryan Brown), movie illusionist turned high-tech toymaker, sics a remote-controlled clown—a circusy beaut with red hair and blue eyes—against another kind of clown: a slimy hit man who's beginning to miss his targets. Rollie uses an elaborately rigged jacket to make the mechanical cutup mimic all his creator's movements. The fight becomes a two-against-one, tag-team wrestling match. The whole movie should unfold this wittily. Rollie once again joins up with Leo McCarthy (Brian Dennehy), now a private eye. Together they suss out why the hit man murdered the honest-cop ex-husband of Rollie's new ladylove (Rachel Ticotin). The effects remain special throughout, but the "FX" series swerves wildly on plot turns while dispensing recklessly with bad guys and good women. Diane Venora, who got killed off in the first film, finally gets a decent memorial nod in this one. Josie DeGuzman gives a warm performance as a helpful government hacker, and Joanna Gleason brings a humorous, knowing incisiveness to the role of a tough-talking prosecutor. Directed by Richard Franklin, from a script by Bill Condon. —M.S. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, Manhattan Twin, and Embassy. . . . ¶ Loews 34th Street Showplace, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex; through June 6.)

Impromptu—James Lapine's film is an ebullient and absurdly entertaining account of the famous love affair of George Sand and Frédéric Chopin. The script, by Sarah Kernochan, makes Sand's wooing and winning of frail, chaste young Chopin into a busy exercise in farce, with a full complement of deception and setbacks and misunderstanding. Celebrities of the Romantic movement—Delacroix, Musset, and Liszt among them—are put through their paces, along with George and Frédéric, in the salons and ballrooms and country houses of eighteen-thirties France; they issue florid declarations of love, hurl barbed epigrams at their rivals, challenge each other to duels, and, over all, make complete asses of themselves in their pursuit of the sublime. They're lively company. The historical figures in this movie are cartoons, but they're cartoons with recognizable human qualities, and the actors look as if they were having a wonderful time charging around in their period costumes. Hugh Grant's Chopin is a brilliant caricature of the Romantic ideal of the artist; he gives the character an air of befuddled unworldliness, and punctuates his readings with delicately timed tubercular coughs. Judy Davis plays Sand—a great actress in a great role. Davis makes Sand's passionate absurdities both funny and tremendously moving; this woman's willingness to embarrass herself seems a kind of romantic heroism. Also with Bernadette Peters, Julian Sands (as Liszt), Mandy Patinkin (as Musset), Emma Thompson, Ralph Brown (as Delacroix), George Corraface, Anton Rodgers, and Anna Masset. The costumes, by Jenny Beavan, are spectacular.—T.R. (5/6/91) (59th Street East Cinema, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, and Metro Cinema.)

Irma la Douce (1963)—Abominable, inexplicably popular sex farce, adapted from a stage musical comedy, but with the score omitted. Billy Wilder, the producer-director, and his co-scenarist, I. A. L. Diamond, hit us over the head with the old rotten jest that prostitution is a petit-bourgeois way of life like any other. Shirley MacLaine and Jack Lemmon, vivid and gifted comics, wrestle painfully with the gross dialogue. Sample: MacLaine, showing Lemmon her attic apartment, explains that it once belonged to an artist who cut off his ear. "Oh," says Lemmon. "Was his name van Gogh?" "No," says MacLaine, "Schwartz." With Lou Jacobi and Herschel Bernardi.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; June 7-10.)

Ju Dou—It's been compared to James M. Cain, but the postman barely rings once in this tale of adultery Chinese style. In a small mountain village in the twenties, an impotent dye-mill owner (Li Wei), crazed over his lack of an heir, tortures his beautiful young bride (Gong Li). She seeks comfort in the arms of his worker nephew (Li Bao-Tian). There's no compelling plot, only the grinding inevitability of fate and tradition. The director, Zhang Yimou, simply metes out punishment to the lovers, the tyrant—and the audience. The lovers' son does most of the damage. He has the lethal power of the Children of the Damned—unfortunately, without the gimmicky zest of their eerie, glowing eyeballs. Zhang started out as a painter and still photographer. He remains one, devoting more attention to the dye mill's set design than to the story or the characters. The bolts of fabric are colored in subtle, vivid hues; the people are made out of whole cloth. In Mandarin.—M.S. (Lincoln Plaza.)

A Kiss Before Dying—Splat! That's the sound of one rich twin clapping to the ground. Soon, Matt Dillon, her lover-killer, moves on to her identical sister (Sean Young plays both women). The writer-director, James Dearden, botches Ira Levin's creepy best-seller about an upwardly mobile psychopath. (This version is even worse than the 1956 one starring Robert Wagner and Joanne Woodward.) Dillon takes a vacation from his "Drugstore Cowboy" level of acting; Young hasn't earned one yet. He practices somnambulism and she impersonates dual zombies. Dearden's idea of black comedy is to show "Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein" on a hotel TV while Dillon, in the manner of "Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer," dismembers a body in the bathtub. Co-starring Max von Sydow and Joy Lee.—M.S. (National Twin. . . . ¶ Chelsea Cinemas; through June 6.)

The Object of Beauty—Jake (John Malkovich) and Tina (Andie MacDowell) are a glamorous American couple camping out in a suite in a swank London hotel. They're unable to settle their account, which when the movie begins stands at about six thousand pounds, because Jake, a speculator, has blown all his money on a bad investment. Jake and Tina are unmarried and have no permanent address; they're charming, attractive drifters, getting by on style. In a sense, they're throwbacks to the sophisticated and slightly disreputable couples who floated airily through thirties romantic comedies: no-strings types who stick together for the best shallow reasons—for sex and laughs and the shared kick of living the high life without having to work too hard. The picture, written and directed by Michael Lindsay-Hogg, is conceived as high-style fluff, but it never delivers quite as much irresponsible fun as it promises. It's like a Lubitsch movie without the speed and the grace and the blissful inconsequentiality. Malkovich, however, is as unaccountably magnetic here as he was in "Dangerous Liaisons." His performance is a postmodern mutation of thirties style, an ungodly hybrid of William Powell and Boris Karloff, and it's sensationally funny. This is as original a piece of acting as you'll ever see in a romantic comedy. The supporting players are an unusually lively group: Lolita Davidovich, Peter Riegert, Joss Ackland, and Bill Paterson.—T.R. (4/22/91) (Village East Cinemas, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

Paris Is Burning—Jennie Livingston's documentary about gay black and Latino men who compete in drag balls is a beautiful piece of work—lively, intelligent, exploratory. The drag queens we see here seem to be holding up a mirror to the world of the empowered as they see it in movies, TV shows, and magazines. In the ballroom, some present themselves as elegant, glamorous women in designer outfits, and walk with the hip-swinging slouch of runway models, while others adopt more mundane personas: college students (of both sexes); military men; Wall Street businessmen; aristocrats at play, dressed for yachting or riding to hounds. The criteria by which all these turns are judged is verisimilitude—"realness." The material is almost too rich, too suggestive. Everything about the ball culture signifies so blatantly and so promiscuously that the movie induces a kind of semiotic daze. Livingston is smart enough not to reduce her subjects to the sum of their possible meanings, perhaps because she realizes that the way the drag performers manipulate image and fetishes and the ico-

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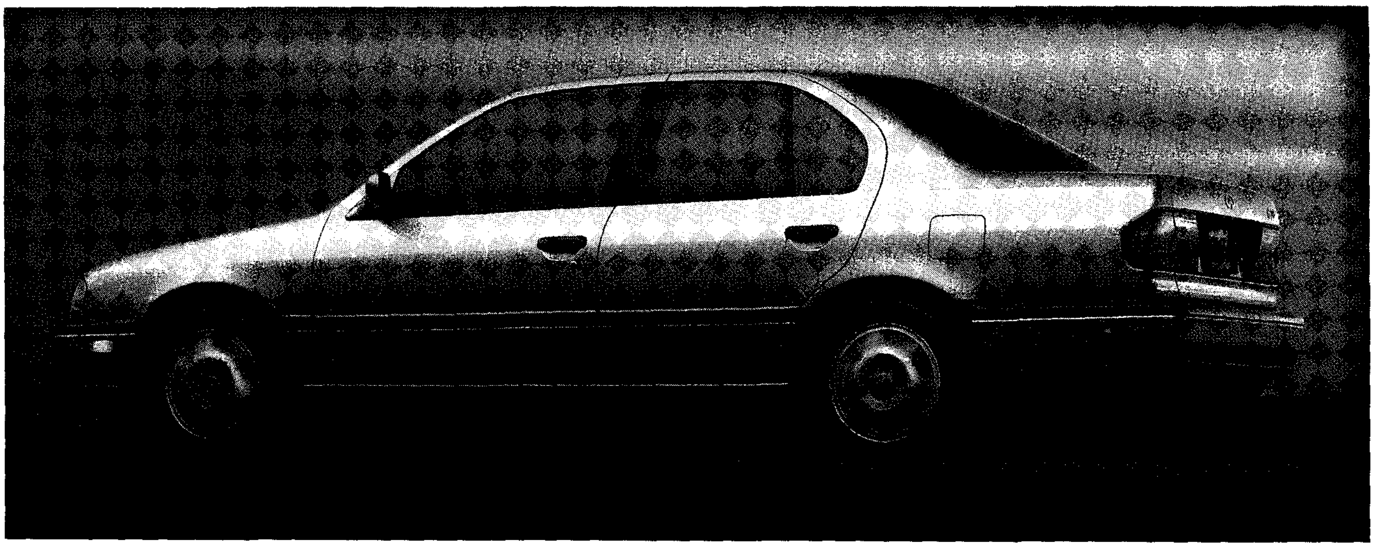

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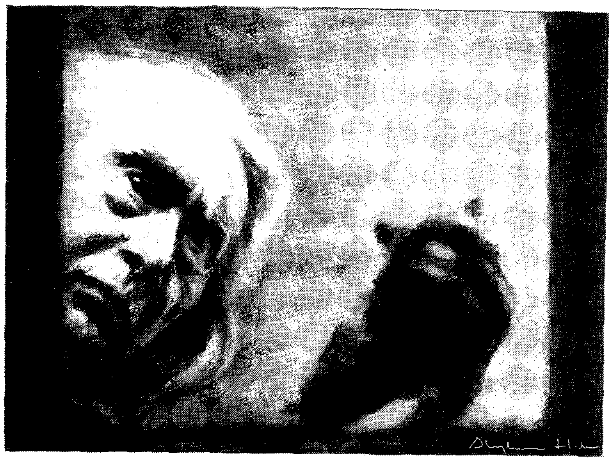
Legend has it that Carl Theodor Dreyer and his cinematographer, Rudolph Maté, hit on the clammy visual style of their 1931 classic "Vampyr" (playing June 12 at the Anthology Film Archives) by chance. According to Phil Hardy's "The Encyclopedia of Horror Movies," when they looked at the oddly hazy rushes, they saw that "a false light in the lens" had grayed the image, creating an elusive, unsettling quality that fit their nightmarish action. The story sounds apocryphal. After all, accidents on horror sets are a prime source of movie lore. But "Vampyr" is terrifying in such an insidious way that it's easy to believe fate lent the filmmakers a hand.

The movie hews close to the traditional demonology. The hero is a stranger in a strange land, and he's sensitive, even vulnerable, to paranormal forces. He checks in to a haunted inn at a riverside village, and soon realizes that the daughter of the local lord is cursed by the bite of the undead. Gradually, he discovers that a vampira buried in the cemetery threatens the hamlet. Her forces include a doctor who specializes in bloodletting, a one-legged soldier with an independent shadow, and a legion of shadow people. Dreyer and Maté's visual mastery is a matter not just of abnormal lighting but also of off-angle compositions, closeups freighted with meaning, and hypnotic camera movements. Their visionary fever peaks with a shot of a man smothered in grain. "Vampyr" is mesmerizingly claustrophobic; when it's over, you feel spared.

nography of popular culture is for many of them a sophisticated form of humor. The most self-aware of the gay men in this picture revel in the ironies of their social and sexual identities, and Livingston makes us appreciate the comic grace and the strange wisdom of that approach. Like all the best documentary filmmakers, she does her subjects the honor of allowing them to retain some of their mystery. Edited by Jonathan Oppenheim.—T.R. (3/25/91) (Film Forum.)

The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes (1970)—Billy Wilder's detective picture is meant to be a put-on of the Sherlock Holmes mythology, concentrating on a case that Holmes (Robert Stephens) fouls up because he's distracted by the treachery of a smart charmer (Geneviève Page). But for this idea to have bounce and suspense we need to see the clues and draw our own inferences, so that we can spot where Holmes is going wrong and enjoy his mistakes. And for it to be somewhat romantic, as it's intended to be, we need to see much more of how the woman deceives him. Instead, one must content oneself with the occasional archly amusing lines, the handsome Victorian décor, and Christopher Challis's lovely (if somewhat dark) tinted-looking cinematography. It's a graceful picture, but it dawdles, and Stephens doesn't seem to have the star presence that Holmes requires. Made in England. With Colin Blakely, Christopher Lee, Clive Revill, Stanley Holloway, and Catherine Lacey. Written by Wilder and I. A. L. Diamond; art direction by Alexander Trauner; music by Miklos Rózsa.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; starting June 12.)

A Rage in Harlem—"If Christ knew what kind of Christians He got here in Harlem, He'd climb back up on the Cross and start over." The screenwriters, John Toles-Bey and Bobby Crawford, take that line from Chester Himes' 1957 crime novel (on which the film is based), and Bill Duke, the director, uses it as a tone setter for his flamboyant, engaging action comedy. This unruly, unassuming movie is filled with pagan enthusiasms. As a Southern belle called Imabelle, Robin Givens carries both the MacGuffin—a trunk filled with gold ore—and the film. It's about a mismatch made in Heaven between this devil with a red dress on and the churchgoing mortician's aide (Forest Whitaker) who gives her shelter when she comes North to turn the gold into cash. Givens' performance is a skillfully prolonged sashay, and Whitaker's is one long, uproarious gulp—until, with the help of his estranged half brother Goldy (Gregory Hines), he fights for his woman. The Givens-Whitaker chemistry doesn't bond every element of the raggedy plot. But the picture is diverting—Duke and the writers come up with scampering jokes. Once again, playing a shady character brings out the best and the baddest in Danny Glover (he's a criminal kingpin called Easy Money). Zakes Mokae has a sassy, robust sweetness in the role of a transvestite brothel owner. Badja Djola is scarily persistent as a villain named Slim— Imabelle's previous man. If the title refers to anything, it's Slim.—M.S. (Olympia. . . . ¶ Gramercy. Evenings only. . . . ¶ Loews Astor Plaza; through June 5.)



"Vampyr"

The Silence of the Lambs—Adapted from a novel by Thomas Harris, Jonathan Demme's thriller is artful pulp—tabloid material treated with intelligence and care and a weird kind of sensitivity. The heroine, Clarice Starling (Jodie Foster), is an earnest F.B.I. trainee who is selected to interview Dr. Hannibal Lecter (Anthony Hopkins), a psychiatrist who is also a famous mass murderer; her superiors hope that Lecter's twisted expertise can somehow be used to help them catch a serial killer known as Buffalo Bill, who flays his victims. In the course of the movie, these conversations between the trainee and the psychiatrist turn into edgy, complex transactions in which she reveals pieces of her inner life in return for his hints on how to find the killer. Hopkins plays the monster with a fine, cold relish: he gives the character a mesmeric animal stillness, the terrifying opacity of a cobra. And the impact of his performance is heightened by its contrast with everything surrounding it: the scrupulous realism of Demme's style, the mundane details of police procedure, and, in particular, the emotional transparence of the heroine. Demme keeps our attention on Starling and her shifting reactions to the world, and his most striking achievement in this picture is his direction of Jodie Foster. The suspense of this manhunt isn't of the straight-ahead kind we're used to: it's reflective, oscillating between approach and avoidance—it has an unnerving intimacy. Also with Scott Glenn, Ted Levine (as Buffalo Bill), Anthony Heald, and Brooke Smith. The screenplay, which is extremely faithful to the novel, is by Ted Tally.—T.R. (2/25/91) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Quad Cinema, and Embassy.)

Spartacus (1960)—This may be the best-paced and most slyly entertaining of all the decadent-ancient-Rome spectacular films. It's a great big cartoon drama, directed by Stanley Kubrick, with Kirk Douglas at his most muscular as the slave gladiator Spartacus, who leads a rebellion of his fellow-slaves against the might of Rome. Spartacus makes some conscientious speeches—out of Howard Fast (who wrote the novel) by way of Dalton Trumbo (who did the screenplay)—but there's so much else going on that it's easy to brush off the moralizing. Laurence Olivier is Spartacus' antagonist, Crassus, a devious patrician who wants to rule Rome in the name of order—he is designed as a supersubtle Fascist. Crassus is a wonderfully gaudy character: he takes Tony Curtis, a young "singer of songs," as his sexual favorite, but he also has a fancy for the slave girl whom Spartacus loves—Jean Simmons. She has never been more beautiful, and the emotions that appear on her humor-filled face are blessedly sane. Peter Ustinov is superb as a slave dealer, who along with his grovelling sycophancy and his merchant's greed has his resentments; and Charles Laughton, amusingly wide in his toga, is a wily old Roman senator. (The two of them have a chat about the beneficial effects of corpulence.) As a gladiator who is Spartacus' friend and who is forced to fight him, Woody Strode has the quietest, most elegant physical presence in the movie. Cinematography by Russell Metty; music by Alex North. Hearst's San Simeon was used for some of the locations. (196 minutes).—P.K. (Worldwide Cinemas.)

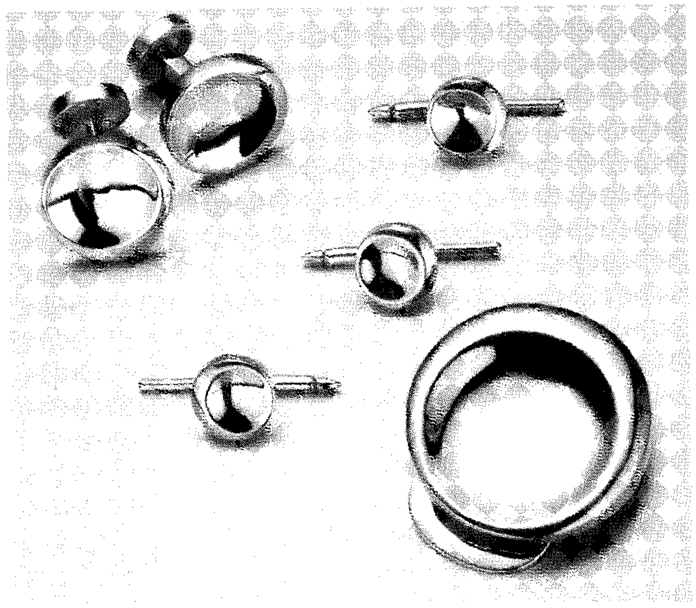
Switch—Blake Edwards (unofficially) reincarnates Vincente Minnelli's lame 1964 comedy, "Goodbye, Charlie." The plot and the attitudes *seem* twenty-seven years old. Ellen Barkin has the Debbie Reynolds role—a womanizer who's killed and comes back to earth as a woman. Barkin (like Reynolds) is transformed outside, not in: she's a macho guy stuffed into a curvy figure. When Barkin says she'll never get used to having such a great body, she recalls Reynolds' saying that she'll no longer have to go to Brigitte Bardot movies—she can just pull down the shades. Barkin sermonizes about date rape and male condescension, but usually she expresses her budding feminism by socking men. Barkin feels authentically female only when—gasp—she becomes pregnant. The large and wasted cast includes Jimmy Smits (as his/her best friend/lover), Tony Roberts, JoBeth Williams (as the woman whose gun sets everything off), and Lorraine Bracco (as a lesbian cosmetics magnate) in a squeamish subplot. Edwards' work here has the crude slapstick vitality that appeals mostly to easily titillated twelve-year-olds.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, and West Side Cinemas. . . . ¶ Murray Hill Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex; through June 6.)

Thelma & Louise—The heroines, played by Geena Davis (Thelma) and Susan Sarandon (Louise), are a couple of Arkansas women who set out for a weekend in the mountains and wind up speeding through the Southwest, on the run from the law. (Louise has murdered a man who tried to rape Thelma in a roadhouse parking lot.) The movie, written by Callie Khouri and directed by Ridley Scott, is designed to keep pushing the women farther and farther out there—past the point of no return, into the vanishing point of a vast Western landscape, and, finally, over the edge of the world. It's a pretty shameless outlaw fantasy; the feminist justification that the script provides for the heroines' behavior doesn't make their actions any less preposterous. But you can recognize the crudeness of the movie's narrative devices and still have an awfully good time. The film has the hellbent energy of a drive-in exploitation movie, and it's eventful—it isn't just figures drifting dazedly through alienating landscapes. There's an exhilarating ease and intuitiveness in the way Davis and Sarandon work together, and the camera lingers on them as if it couldn't get enough of them. Scott seems to want to show us what they look like in every kind of light and every kind of mood. His direction gives the story a pleasantly dreamy quality: when Thelma and Louise are on the road, the movie has the look of a mirage, a jewelled shimmer that keeps us half hypnotized. He turns Davis and Sarandon into outlaw princesses, and they're so vivid and likable that they carry us past the plot's most obvious contrivances; a little disbelief seems a small price to pay for being allowed to remain in their company. Also with Harvey Keitel, Brad Pitt, Christopher McDonald, Michael Madsen, Timothy Carhart, and Stephen Tobolowsky. The luminous cinematography is by Adrian Biddle.—T.R. (6/3/91) (Loews Village Theatre VII, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, Guild, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

Truly, Madly, Deeply—A lovely, original comedy about a young woman, named Nina (Juliet Stevenson), who is obsessed with the memory of her dead lover. The writer and director, Anthony Minghella, establishes an unusual, delicately varied mood, and the film moves gracefully from a realistic mode into a fantastic one. One night, Nina's lover, Jamie (Alan Rickman), reappears in her flat, and his presence seems perfectly natural to us: he has emerged from a setting that is already charged with the heroine's feelings for him. Once he's back, she has to confront, in the most concrete way, what it would really mean to live the rest of her life with a dead guy as her significant other: the movie is less a ghost story than a weird kind of domestic comedy. Minghella draws us into a fresh and startlingly humane vision of modern urban life; the details of the heroine's way of living always seem to point beyond themselves, and there's an emotional unity to everything we see. Minghella writes dialogue that sounds casual but somehow takes us straight to the heart of his work's larger concerns, and he directs the actors beautifully. Rickman is unexpectedly romantic here, and very funny besides. And Stevenson gives a radiant performance: she doesn't have a false moment, or a boring one, in the whole picture. Also with Michael Maloney, Christopher Rózycki, Stella Maris, David Ryall, Deborah Findlay, and the always marvellous Bill Paterson.—T.R. (5/6/91) (Worldwide Cinemas, and Cinema 3.)

Truth or Dare—Madonna was at her best on "Saturday Night Live," when she played herself for laughs as a pop temptress who puts out for her fans. But in this maddeningly prolonged, self-important, semi-documentary backstage look at her Blond Ambition tour, she plays not just for laughs but for shocks, tears, leers, and, most of all, for adoration. Her way of being truthful and daring is to allow the young director, Alek Keshishian, to depict her as a twenty-four-hour diva who mothers her backup performers and as a scantily clad Statue of Liberty standing up for free expression. The bits of her stage show (shot in 35-mm. color; the rest is in 16-mm. black-and-white) seem ludicrous when she describes them as part of "an emotional journey." The movie has been so over-reported that the celebrity bits with Warren Beatty, Kevin Costner, and Sandra Bernhard, and the friction among members of Madonna's biological and stage families, come off as the retold story. There's no jolt left to seeing Madonna do what you've already read about. The movie is all calculation, no revelation—unless you count the calculation itself as a revelation.—M.S. (Loews Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, Eastside Cinema, Chelsea Cinemas, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

You Only Live Twice (1967)—The fifth of the Bonds, it can easily be differentiated from the others because it's the Japanese one. It's a product, but probably the most consistently entertaining of the Bond packages up to the time—not as startling as parts of "Goldfinger" but much superior to "Thunderball." Ken Adam's sci-fi production designs (including a hollow volcano) seem almost perfectly calculated for the genre. Lewis Gilbert is a rather more humanistic director than his predecessors, and he's a reasonably efficient traffic manager; he doesn't let the actors loiter on the sets too long. And Sean Connery's James Bond isn't the sleek, greasy-lipped dummy of the earlier films; playing the superhero as a paunchy, rather bemused spectator, Connery gives him more character than he's ever had before. This casual, human Bond is rather tender in his sex relationships—one might almost call them love relationships this time. The Roald Dahl screenplay (out of Jules Verne and old movies) is clever enough, and Donald Pleasence, as Blofeld, pets his white cat ominously. With Alexander Knox as the American President. The cinematography is by Freddie Young.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; June 11.)



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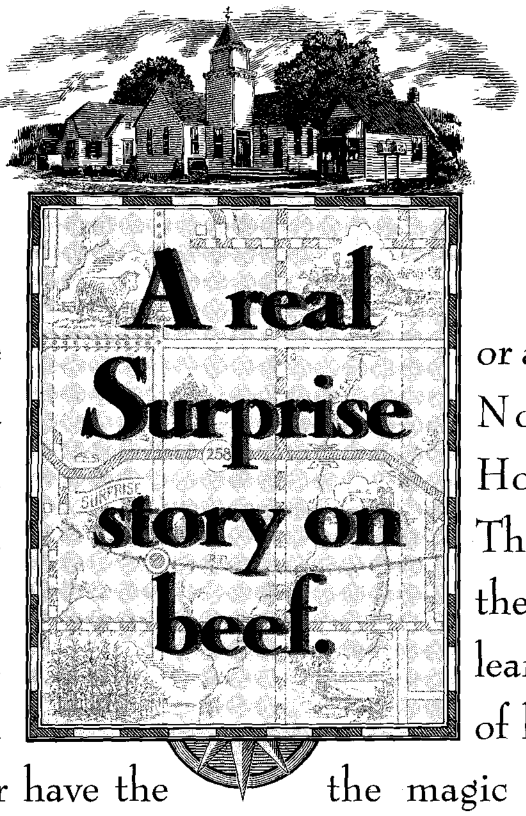

A real Surprise story on beef.
258
SURPRISE

Surprise

Fire up the skillet and man the steak knives. I've traveled down route 258 to Surprise, Indiana, and what did I find? A major surprise. Never have the facts proved so delicious; never have figures looked so good. Surprise: lean, trimmed beef has no more cholesterol than chicken without the skin. And only 1.5 grams more saturated fat—or about 14 calories.** No wonder those Hoosiers are happy. They've also discovered the Skinniest Six, the leanest cuts of beef. So need I say the magic words "marinated sirloin"? Unwrap the steak, toss the salad and call in the army of friends. People in Indiana are already celebrating with—you guessed it—a Surprise party. See you in the next town. BEEF

THE SKINNIEST SIX

ROUND TIP 157 calories
5.9 gms total fat (2.1 gms sat. fat)*

TOP ROUND 153 calories
4.2 gms total fat (1.4 gms sat. fat)*

TOP LOIN 176 calories
8.0 gms total fat (3.1 gms sat. fat)*

EYE OF ROUND 143 calories
4.2 gms total fat (1.5 gms sat. fat)*

TENDERLOIN 179 calories
8.5 gms total fat (3.2 gms sat. fat)*

TOP SIRLOIN 165 calories
6.1 gms total fat (2.4 gms sat. fat)*

Beef.
Real food for real people.

**Source: USDA Handbook 8-13 1990 Rev. Figures are for a cooked and trimmed 3 oz. serving. 4 oz. uncooked yield 3 oz. cooked.*
***Here are the respective averages for saturated fat, fat and cholesterol in a 3 oz. serving. Lean beef: 3.2 gms; 8.4 gms; 73 mgs. Skinniest Six Cuts: 2.3 gms; 6.2 gms; 69 mgs. Skinless chicken: 1.7 gms; 6.3 gms; 76 mgs. ©1991 Beef Industry Council and Beef Board.*

THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

NOTE from a writer friend of ours:

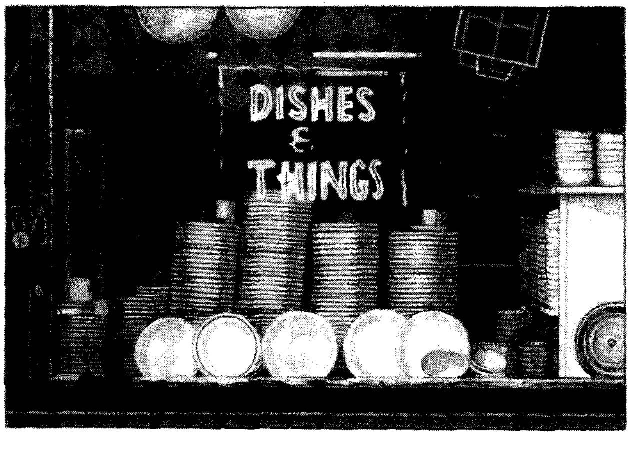
I'm always on the lookout for activities that produce the sound of typing (so my wife will think I'm working) but aren't work. Late last year, I found a good one: publishing a newspaper for the children in the small Connecticut town where I live. The children write articles, draw pictures, and take photographs, and I correct spelling and lay out the pages, using my personal computer and a desktop-publishing program. I try to edit lightly, even if I don't always get the jokes. ("What did the battery say to the apple? I am going to roast your core.")

The children's response to the newspaper, which is called *Junior Journal*, verges on the overwhelming. The first issue was two legal-size pages long, the second was eight, the third was twelve, and the latest was fourteen. The fourteen-page issue could have been twenty pages long, but I ran out of time and money, so I took the opportunity to introduce my elementary-school-age staff to the journalistically significant concept of rejection. That was appropriate, I suppose, because in some ways *Junior Journal* itself is a product of rejection. Voters in the three towns that constitute my regional school district have been making draconian cuts in the school budget. Last year, they defeated the school board's first six proposals. The budget they finally passed called for the elimination of many programs (including foreign-language classes for sixth graders and numerous extracurricular activities) and several staff positions. Some seniors have been spending almost half their school day in study hall, because the district can't afford to teach them for seven periods. Putting out a newspaper seemed to me and some other people to be one way of making up for part of what the children in my town have lost.

Junior Journal covers a broad spectrum of subjects. In one issue a first grader wrote, "It's not good to put tape on your skin. Reasons: 1. It makes your lips bleed. 2. It makes your lips chapped. You cannot do it on any part of your body." A third grader contributed an advertisement announcing the formation of a pet-sitting service. A second grader wrote a capsule summary of the Second World War: "Once there was a man called Hitler. He was a madman. He wanted to rule the whole world. But the law stopped him."

One story that *Junior Journal's* reporters haven't tackled yet is the story of their town's apparent abandonment of its obligation to educate them. The voters have just passed next year's school budget, and on the first try, but the new budget represents a further cut in services. And there are other woes. The building that houses the sixth through the twelfth grades is falling apart. It was built—in 1972, one year before the OPEC oil embargo—with lots of optimism and a flood of state aid. The building is two or three times too big, has "pods" instead of classrooms, is heated electrically, and needs two million dollars' worth of repairs. Who will pay? The state, which provided about eighty per cent of the construction cost, is now broke and can't be very generous. In fact, the governor has threatened to cut its education grants to the district by about three-quarters of a million dollars.

The articles that the children do write about school are invariably upbeat. "A loud, cheerful, and long clapping celebration welcomed him with smiling faces," a fourth grader wrote in an article about a visit to the primary school by a local man who had served in the Persian Gulf. The children don't realize yet that their parents and grandparents have been spending their futures for many years now, and our profligacy has caught up with all of us.



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Fortunates

"BELIEVE me, if you have been shut up for a year and a half, it can get too much for you some days," Anne Frank wrote in hiding. "In spite of all justice and thankfulness, you can't crush your feelings. Cycling, dancing, whistling, looking out into the world, feeling young, to know that I'm free—that's what I long for; still, I mustn't show it, because I sometimes think if all eight of us began to pity ourselves, or went about with discontented faces, where would it lead us? I sometimes ask myself, 'Would anyone, either Jew or non-Jew, understand this about me, that I am simply a young girl badly in need of some rollicking fun?' "

This passage came to our mind at an early moment in the First International Gathering of Children Hidden During World War II, a two-day conference held at the Marriott Marquis Hotel over the Memorial Day weekend, which we attended as a guest. As we were sipping a cup of coffee on a bench, two women asked if they might join us. Both were fit and lively. One, who was middle-aged and elegantly dressed, introduced herself as Regina. The other, some years younger, had a dazzling smile and cascades of honey-gold hair; she told us that her name was Sonia. As they talked, we learned that they were sisters and were both participants in the conference. They were joking about Sonia's nametag, which Regina had picked up for her from the registration table without double-checking it; the tag turned out to be for the wrong Sonia.

"She's going incognito," Regina said.

"I've always fallen through the cracks," Sonia said. "I was born in 1940, after our parents fled Germany for Belgium with three children. Who would have a baby then? I ask you. I was the Belgian accident, the one in hiding."

A woman who had joined us on the bench overheard Sonia's remark and started to laugh. "Why are you laughing?" Sonia asked.

"Because that describes all of us," the woman said. "We've all been in hiding for years."

Sonia paused for a moment, then turned to us and said in a low voice, "Look at them all." She swept her arm around to indicate the hundreds of conferencegoers filtering through the room. "Anne Frank became popular because she died," Sonia said. "No one knows anything about these people, because they are alive."

By the end of the two days, however, we knew quite a lot about quite a few. We heard about the pain of surviving in silence, and about the continuing psychological devastation that such unexpressed pain can wreak in adulthood. We heard about the courage of the children's adult rescuers, both Gentile and Jewish. We heard about the abusive conditions that some hidden children endured. Once or twice, we heard further references to Anne Frank. "Anne Frank was a hidden child, but *me*?" said a man named Wolf, with whom we struck up a conversation late the first afternoon. "True, I was separated from my mother and sister in 1939, when I left Poland as a teen-ager, but I went to join the Russian partisans in the woods. How can you say I was hidden? I was in action."

Despite its sobering theme, the conference at times resembled a well-organized college reunion. There were tearful encounters and giddy spirits. Within the first hour, the news went around that someone had found a brother. "There isn't a person here who isn't glad to be alive," we were told by a dapper man named Paul, who was one of a group of exuberant men: during the war, they had been hidden in a Belgian home for the children of fallen Gentile officers—a home whose population, of a hundred and fifty or so, had come to include eighty-three Jewish boys. Paul introduced us to David, another of the home's grateful charges, who had brought along a scrapbook and a photograph album recording the years in hiding. The home, it turned out, was in a château, with ivory-colored walls and fairy-tale turrets. Not only were the boys fed, clothed, instructed, and loved there but they also invented a Scout troop and had picnics under spreading trees. "This is me, laughing," David said, pointing to a little boy with a wide grin. "And I haven't changed."

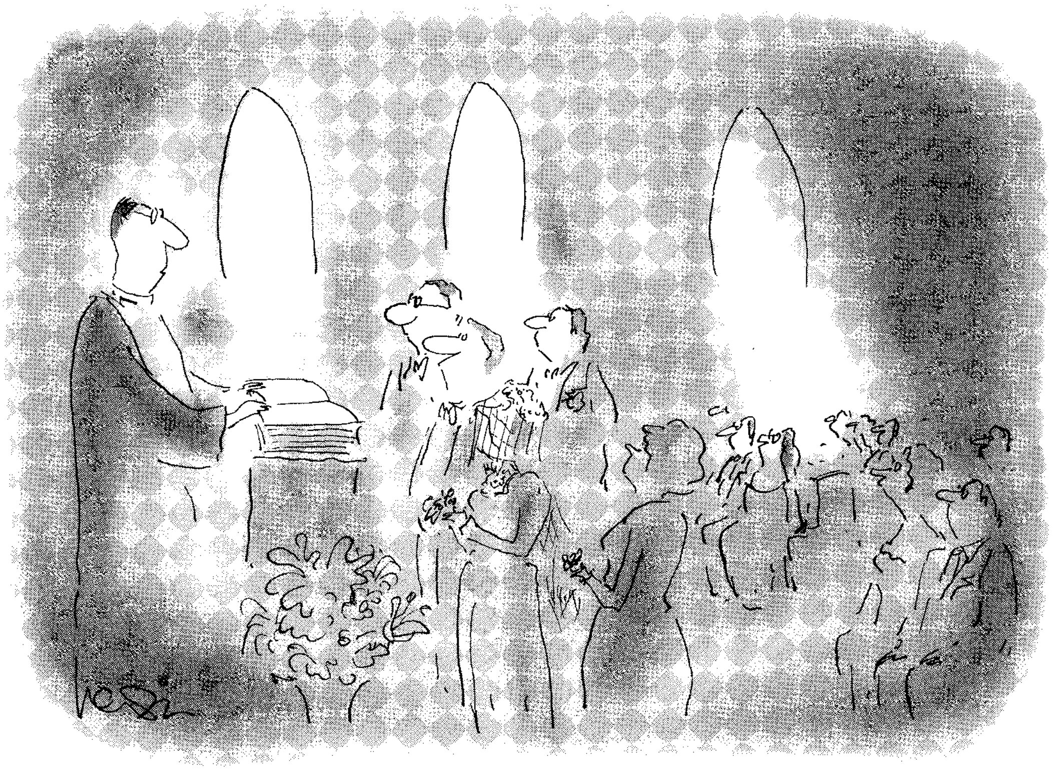
Of all the anecdotes—painful and amusing—that we heard at the conference, three haunt us. The first comes from a Gentile psychoanalyst, Marion Pritchard, who, as a young woman in her native Holland, was responsible for saving the lives of scores of young Jews. "One day in 1942, I saw some Nazis loading Jewish children onto a truck," she told the assembly during a panel on the motivations of the rescuers. "The children were crying, and they weren't moving fast enough. The Nazis picked them up wherever they could—by an arm, by a leg; in the case of one little girl, by her pigtails—and threw them into the truck. Two women came up and tried to stop the men from doing this, and the Nazis took them and threw *them* into the truck, on top of the children." Ms. Pritchard paused, and added, "It was at that moment that I vowed I would save children."

The second story was told to us by a woman named Trudy, who currently teaches English and women's studies to college students. Trudy, also a native of Holland, was hidden with a succession of Gentile families during the war. Her parents died in a concentration camp, and soon after the war she went to live with an uncle and aunt, who themselves were concentration-camp survivors. One day, when Trudy was home from school with measles and, as she recalled it, was rather cranky, her aunt became exasperated with her and began speaking with particular sharpness. "I stood at the window," Trudy said, "and I put on a wistful face, pointed to the clouds, and said to her, 'Is my mother up there?' At that point, my aunt's anger evaporated and her whole demeanor softened. I thought, Gotcha!" Trudy went on to say, "You know, I wish I could tell you that difficulties ennoble a person, but I can't. People without them are often much nicer, less afraid of the world. I learned to survive by saying 'No,' but the trouble was that I kept saying 'No' long after it was useful. I had to learn how to say 'Yes,' or 'Maybe,' or 'Let me think about it.' "

The third story we heard from Regina, during lunch on the second day. In 1944, Regina's hiding place was discovered by the Nazis, and, at the age of eighteen, she was shipped in a cattle car to Auschwitz. After surviving the death march that followed the evacuation of that camp, she passed through several other concentration camps, and was liberated by the Russians in 1945. Like all internees in Auschwitz, Regina had a number tattooed on her left arm. She showed it to us. High on her forearm, near the elbow joint, we saw "A-5207." The characters were about a quarter inch high, in royal-blue ink, and quite legible.

"My God," Sonia said. "Five-two-seven is the address of the store that my husband and I own. I never thought of it before."

Regina smiled, and said, "Years ago, when I was a seamstress in Washington Heights, I played the numbers sometimes. Once, I played this number with the bookies. I won fifty bucks."



"Are there any here today who feel this union is not in the best interests of baseball?"

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Transitions

HERE come the new Mongolians, with their diffident, questioning, laconic English; their telex numbers in Ulan Bator, embossed on their new business cards; their ninety-two-per-cent-wool-and-eight-per-cent-nylon Argati blankets; their bags of Bactrian camel's hair; their wheat-based Arkhi and Chinggis Khan vodkas; their plans for marketing their ancient drum-shaped nomadic dwelling, the gher, as a modular home for the budget-minded American family (the new slogan: "You Are Welcomed in the Ghers"); their hopes for Mongolian Hot-Pot, the fast-food chain; their faith in the shaping invisible hand of the free market; their dreams of a new Mongolian society of opportunity.

Two years ago, Mongolia was still locked in the Mongolian past. "Double bondage" is how one of the new Mongolians put it last week, at the first Mongolian trade fair in New York, which occupied a space on the seventh floor of a nondescript building on Broadway near Fifty-seventh Street. "Bondage to command economy, plus associations in West with pillaging. Hordes. Brezhnev and Genghis Khan—drabness of the Soviet bloc, plus associations with barbarians. An image problem." To solve this image problem, the new, broadly based, forward-looking, business-minded Mongolian government, which came to power after the Mongolian "quiet revolution" of 1989, sent a delegation to New York a few weeks ago. It rented the space on Broadway, put up a gher, and moved in. All around the room the Mongolians hung up animal skins: a luxuriant silvery fox, a terrifying wolf, a still more terrifying bear, claws and ears still attached. Then they scattered some Bactrian camel's hair around the room—light as air, but oddly preppy-colored. They hung up some Argati blankets; invited an artist known as Mr. Bathashai, an émigré Mongolian living in New York, to hang some paintings; and waited. But not many people came to see the new Mongolians—in part because it wasn't until late in their planning that the Mongolians found the publicity guy of their dreams, a talented New York adman named Neil Steinhardt.

Neil Steinhardt says, "They didn't really get it about publicity. I mean, I think they thought that you would just hang up these, uh, pelts, and then sit inside the gher with some vodka bottles and offer them to people. It's the nomadic approach, I guess. The advertising firm I work for had had some association with the Mongolian government, and when I went to the Mongolians' trade fair and saw how unsure they looked I offered to do some P.R. Just some fax teasers."

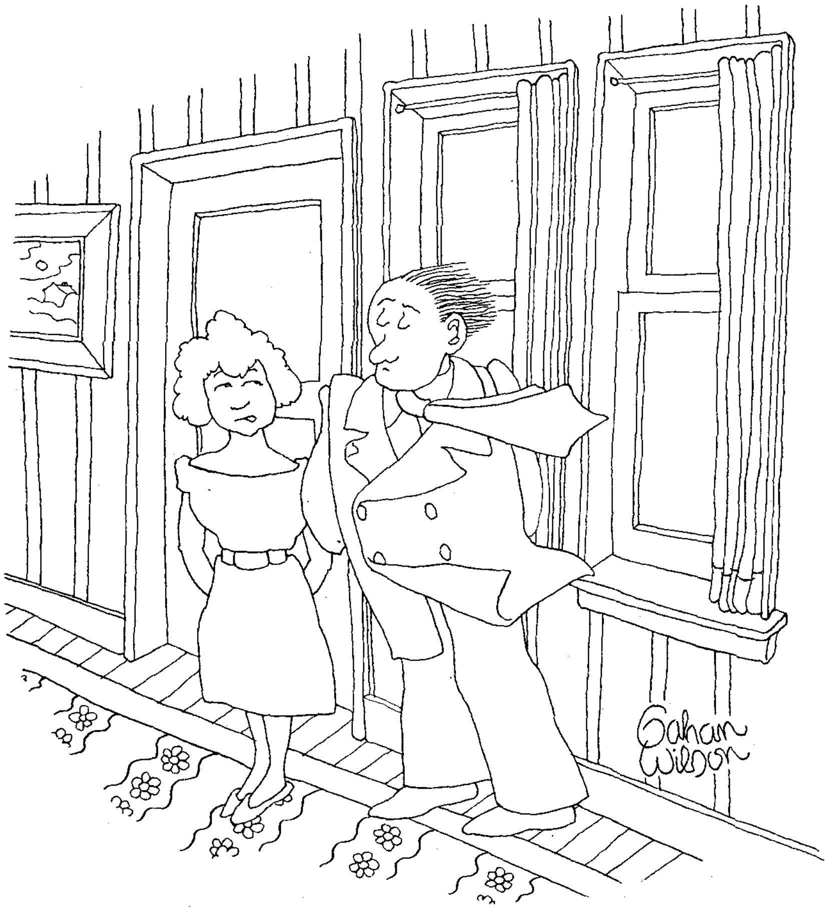
Here are the first sentences of Neil's first fax teasers, which finally brought trade journalists, wool-industry journalists, and death-of-Communism-with-weird-twist beat writers into the gher on Broadway: "Have you been wondering lately what ever became of Mongolia?" And "The political climate of the Mongolian People's Republic may have warmed in the last year, but the same cannot be said for the steppes of Mongolia." And "You never knew that some of the finer pleasures in life were Mongolian, but then again you haven't been thinking too much about Mongolia, until now."

"Mongolians" or "Mongols"? One of the new Mongolians said, "We prefer 'Mongolian,' and accuracy insists 'Outer Mongolians.' But we know affection in the West for 'Mongol'—sentimental associations, so forth and so on." He explained that Mongolia is divided into three parts: Inner Mongolia, which has long been a satrapy of the People's Republic of China; Tuva, which is part of the Soviet Union; and Outer Mongolia, which is now free. Outer Mongolia is inhabited by the Khalkhas and the Kalmucks. The Khalkhas seem to think of themselves as the real Mongolian article, and regard the Kalmucks, who originated in Dzungaria, in Western China, as interlopers.

The new Mongolians give credit

for their newness to the quiet revolution. For instance, here is I. Amarkhu, the export manager for Noosimpex, which is the new Mongolian wool division: “We are involved in raw-wool blankets, and in consumer goods. The revolution changed the minds. We are in the beginning of the Mongolian program for a transition to a Mongolian market economy. Free currency-exchange rate, state working very closely with the International Monetary Fund, the privatization of all Mongolian state-owned enterprises. Before, everything was regulated by the state. Now, free. Entrepreneurs. Venture capital. Ulan Bator stock exchange opens later this year. Challenge of consumer goods.” One Mongolian consumer good is National Brand Dried Curds. The curds come in a yellow box, on one side of which is printed “Produced in Mongolia by Milk Factory.” A Mongolian says, “Could be like frozen yogurt. Maybe, possibly?”

Here is Toch-Toch, who calls himself the Mongolian Outside Consultant. He was educated in India, and he is, he says, one of just four ethnic Mongolians who are United States citizens. “That is, true Mongol Khalkhas,” he says. “Now, I’m married to a Kalmuck girl, and there are probably more than a few Kalmucks around here and there. A dime a dozen, I would say—the Kalmucks. But the true blood-pool Khalkhas, only four. Now, you must rather understand, the new Mongolia—it is in the transitional phase. Openness is only tip of the iceberg, I would say. Mongolia has gone from being a socialist nation to being the first to incorporate and promulgate complete shift to the market economy. First to push to limit. The dislocations? Many, many. Mongolians, I would say, their outstanding feature is their adaptability. We would, I would say, have much in common with the Japanese. When the Mongolians came to France, they became genuine Francophiles. Soufflés, delicacies of all kinds, wine cellars. Yes, the nomadic tradition—adaptability! Like the Japanese. Let me suggest, here’s an interesting angle for you to build up the story. Mongolian state of mind is well revealed by that fine film ‘Dances with Wolves.’ The Mongolians are the way the Indians were in that Oscar-winning movie. One particular scene I want to point out—that of the chief and his wife. They engage in making love because it’s so very natural. Privacy is not a natural concept. Mongolians would not do such a thing. They are more—prurient? Puritanical! But it is an interesting angle—the new Mongolians, the next Japanese. But also like Indians in the popular film.”



“We’re no longer standing in the wind, Roger.”

Miss Subways

BROWN cake with gray icing isn’t our favorite, but no one seemed to be complaining, so we were a good sport and ate three pieces. The cake was in the shape of a subway car, and the icing represented paint. The cake commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the naming of the first Miss Subways, and the fifteenth anniversary of the naming of the last. It had been provided by Ellen Hart Sturm, who was Miss Subways in March and April of 1959, and who had invited all the former Miss Subways she could find to a reunion at her restaurant, Ellen’s Stardust Diner, on Sixth Avenue. About fifty (out of a total of two hundred or so) showed up, some of them coming from as far away as Florida and California.

The most famous Miss Subways ever was the dancer Sono Osato, who wasn’t a real Miss Subways but played one (as Miss Turnstiles) in the musical comedy “On the Town.” The second most famous Miss Subways was Vera-Ellen, who took over in the 1949 movie version of the show. The third most famous Miss Subways was the first real one, Mona Freeman: she went on to star, with Alan Ladd, in “Branded,” which was released in 1950, and she also appeared in “Dear Ruth,” “Dear Wife,” and “Dear Brat”—a series of comedies from the same era. For subway riders, the zenith of her celebrity occurred somewhat earlier—in May, 1941, when posters featuring her picture appeared in trains all over the city. She was fourteen years old and had a cute smile. Her poster explained that she had been selected by the “Famous Beauty Authority” John Robert Powers (who ran a modelling agency) and that her ambition was to become “a top-notch magazine illustrator.” When subway riders saw her picture, they became confident that the subway was a glamorous yet wholesome form of transportation, and only rarely did they draw a mustache on her face. Mona Freeman did not attend the reunion, but she was present in the form of videotapes of "Branded," which were playing on four old-fashioned television sets way up near the ceiling.

Quite a few Miss Subways went on to achieve renown of one sort or another. Marie Therese Thomas Ferrari, who was Miss Subways in March of 1946, appeared regularly on "The Jackie Gleason Show," and in 1948 she had a part in the first live television commercial, which was for the U.S. Rubber Company, and in which she wore a bathing suit made partly and a bathing cap made entirely of rubber. Mary Gardiner Timoney (May, 1957) eventually gave birth to both a future columnist for *Soap Opera Weekly* and a future stand-in for the actor Bruce Willis. Marie Crittenden Kettler (January and February, 1957) became the First Lady of Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey. (Her husband is the mayor.) Peggy Byrne (March and April, 1958) turned out to be the aunt of Peggy Noonan, who has written speeches for Presidents Reagan and Bush, and who would have been named Joan if at birth she hadn't looked so much like her mother's sister.

Of course, all former Miss Subways are famous to some extent, by virtue of having been Miss Subways. Most were very eager to speak to reporters and pose for photographers and camera crews. At one point, we felt a hand on our shoulder and turned around to see a man in a dark suit, ready to introduce us to Rita Rogers Gross (March and April, 1955). She told us that the man was "a very good friend, a P.R. man for me," and then caught us up on her life. "Later that year, I married the West Pointer I was engaged to, but it was fun being Miss Subways, because you would see people nudge each other on the trains," she said. "I am now executive secretary with a pulp-and-paper consulting firm in Tarrytown. It's a Finnish firm, so I won't even bother spelling the name for you." As she talked to us, her eyes combed the room. Suddenly, she saw a cameraman from a local television station. "Oh, he's taking pictures!" she said, and she rushed away, the P.R. man hurrying to catch up.

Most of the Miss Subways had brought copies of their posters, and they held them up when photographers told them to. Several had brought other memorabilia as well. Winifred McAleer Noyes (June, 1944) showed us a copy of the April 23, 1945, issue of *Life*, which contained (along with an article about the death of President Roosevelt) a two-page spread on the Miss Subways so far. It was illustrated with pictures of posters, among them hers. "The mail that came in after that was incredible," she told us. "There were love letters, marriage proposals—everything imaginable. There was one very flowery letter from the Ivory Coast, in Africa, and there were letters from all over the world, the South Pacific particularly. It was great fun. The letters came in for months afterward. The post office in Jackson Heights was inundated."

The easiest Miss Subways to find at the reunion was Stella Deere (November and December, 1961), because she was wearing a large white hat that said "Bronson Pinchot Fan" on it in big black letters. Stella Deere's real name is Stella Malecki. When she was chosen to be Miss Subways, she picked Deere out of the phone book, she said, because she didn't want to shock her father, who had a heart condition. Since then, she has used Deere as her middle name or, occasionally, her last. "Everyone has to have a happy experience in their life that makes them feel special," she said. "I belong to no organizations of any kind. Being Miss Subways—being one of two hundred—is really my only thing that I belong to in my life. It's a very nice feeling to belong to something. It's nice to be happy for a while."

All the Miss Subways we talked to seemed to be extremely happy. We spent some time sitting in a booth with several who were looking at newspaper and magazine clippings from the forties. One of the clippings, a two-page spread from *Collier's*, showed a number of Miss Subways frolicking together on Jones Beach in bathing suits. In one of the photographs, all the Miss Subways were kneeling in the sand, and in another they were having a tug-of-war. Dorothea Mate (June, 1942) walked past the booth, glanced down at the pictures, and said, "That's me! That's me! Oh, my God! I had forgotten that! For heaven's sake!" Looking more closely at the clipping, she found herself in a second picture. She smiled broadly. "It was our moment in glory," she said. "Even after forty-nine years, you can live it again. You think back, and you know you once had it. If you have a bad day, you think, Oh, try again—you were Miss Subways."

CARBOHYDRATES

8:15. A balmy evening in February, the kind we've been having since global warming began. As usual, I'm standing around, wondering when Jonathan is going to show up. He's already fifteen minutes late.

8:17. At least I've stopped wondering why I always get involved with the wrong man, why I constantly find myself in destructive relationships. I used to think it was my fault. Then I read this book. Suddenly, I understood: he can try to deny it, but my father is an alcoholic. And I am an adult child of an alcoholic.

My father has never thought that he was an alcoholic. Yet, when I was growing up, he had to have a drink every night when he came home from work. Guess who fixed it for him. He called it a "Jeanie." After me. I've tried to help Dad face up to what he is, and I feel good about my efforts.

Jeanie! One drink! One little drink! One drink a night does not an alcoholic make!

Dad, you had to have it.

Of course I had to! If you knew the pressures of Unit-Sales Management—

I'm in Retail Dispersal, and you won't find me drinking.

Then I'd come home to "When are we going to get a new washing machine? How are we going to pay for Jean's education and take that trip to Europe? What do you think of this hairdo?" Your mother had a million questions. But you. You were so mature for your age. You were there to listen. I never needed to go out and find a bartender to talk to. Not when I had my Jeanie.

Stop trying to implicate me in your behavior! I will not be your co-denier!!

The olive has always been my favorite part!

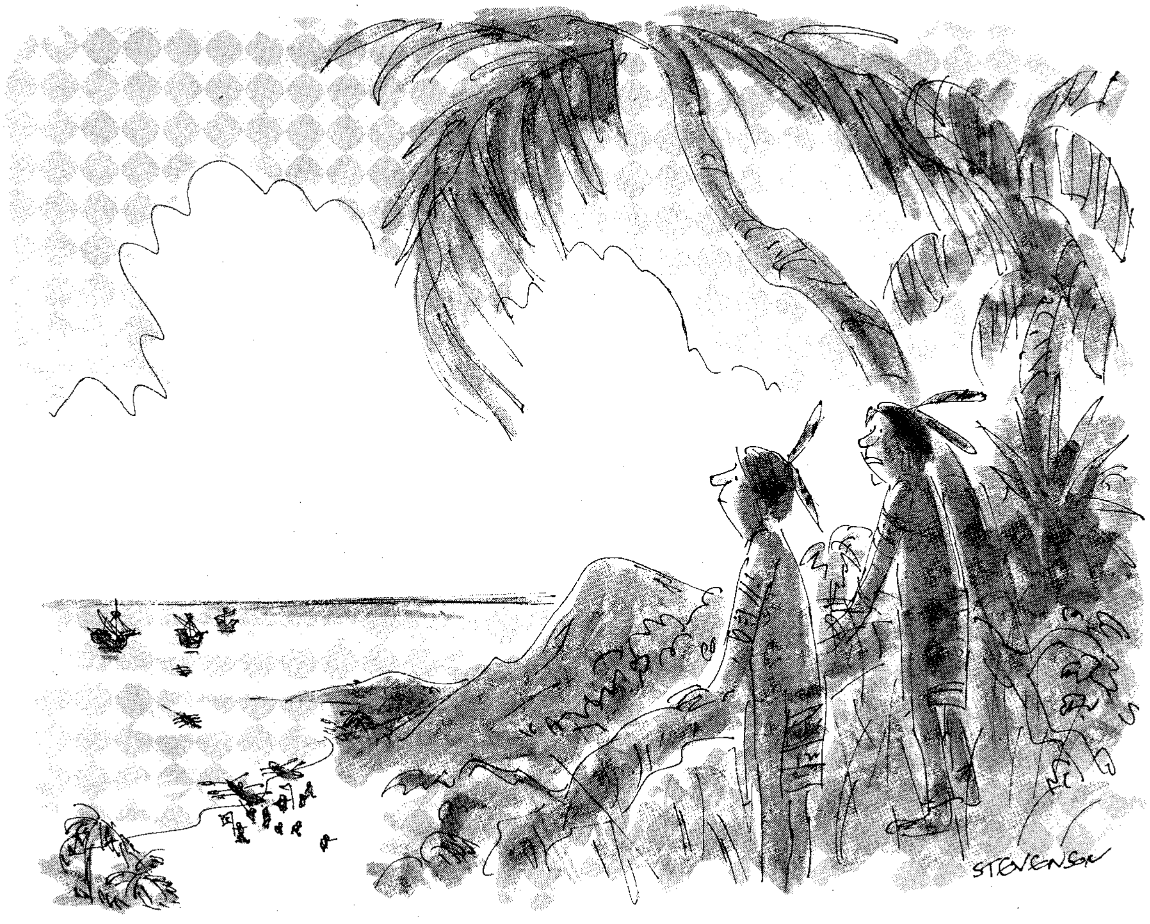
8:21. Jonathan shouldn't keep me waiting for dinner. He knows I'm hypoglycemic, even though he refuses to believe it. He thinks hypoglycemia was invented to annoy him. All those people who weren't really hypoglycemic gave it a bad name. You'd be at an art gallery with them, or you'd be trying on a pair of slacks, or you'd be talking about something that interested you. Out of the blue, they'd announce that they were having a hypoglycemic attack. They absolutely *had* to eat *that minute* or else they were going to faint. And it would all be your fault. Of course, they weren't hypoglycemic at all. They were just manipulative. *I* take responsibility for my own hypoglycemia. I always bring food with me.

8:25. These really are pretty good cookies. Macadamia nuts have a particularly stabilizing effect on my blood sugar. So does guacamole, come to think of it. Too bad it's so hard to pack in a shoulder bag. The important thing is, I'm calmer.

I'm convinced that stress is the No. 1 factor in causing hypoglycemia. The stress from your job, the stress of being in a relationship, the stress of parents. Simply *having* parents is stressful.

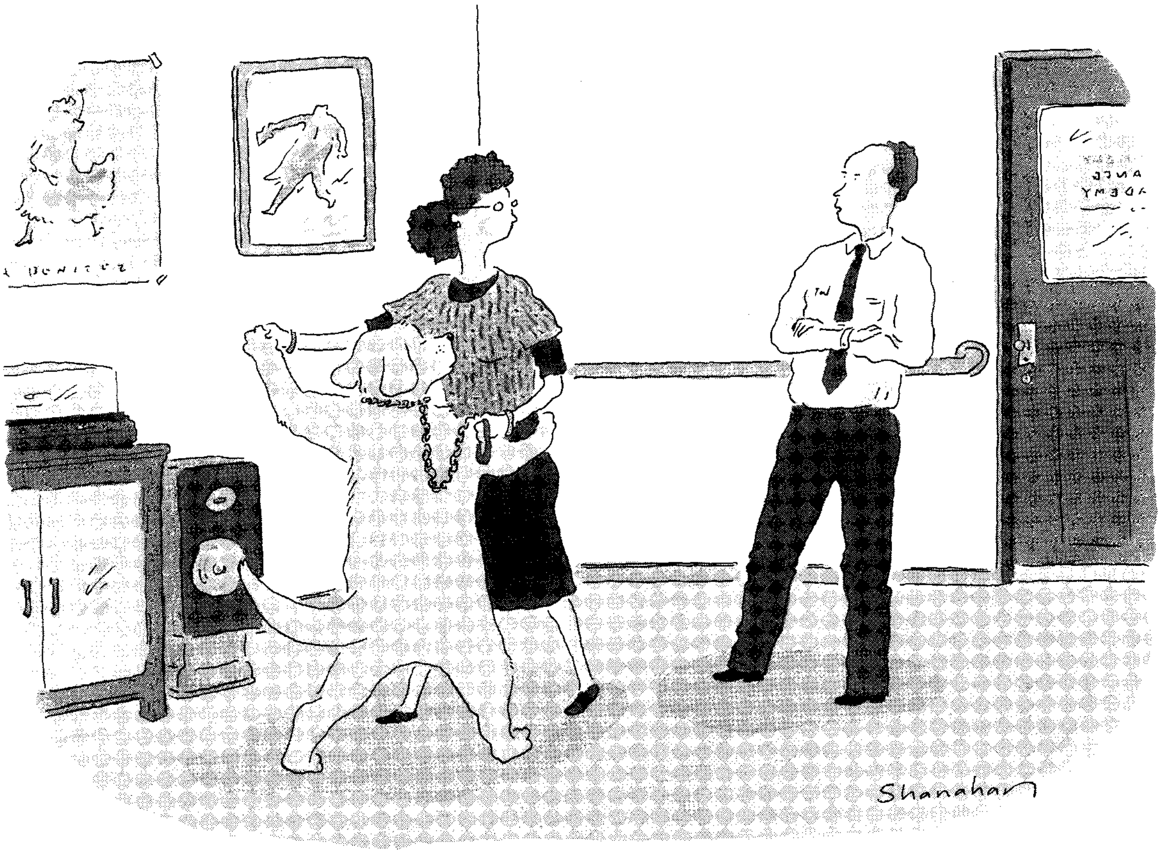
8:30. The worst part of being an adult child of an alcoholic is that I always find myself in relationships with passive-aggressives. How hard it is to tell if a man is a passive-aggressive! At first, they seem perfect. They listen to you, they let you take charge. You want to discuss feminist issues? They don't get threatened; they smile.

Then. Then the other behavior begins. The endless waiting—*you* waiting for them. I was involved with this P.-A., Tim. I had to be the one to decide that it was time for us to take a vacation, where we'd go, how we'd get there. He waited until we were at the airport to assert himself, just as they were giving the final boarding call. He said he needed to buy a copy of *GQ*, and he wandered off. He never showed up on that flight. I got on the plane anyway, and had the worst hypoglycemic attack of my life. As soon as I landed in Oaxaca, I had to eat five orders of guacamole to get myself to the point where I could breathe regularly. I couldn't look at an avocado today if it



"Well, so much for pre-Columbian."

weren't for how they stabilize me.



"If he tries to dip, Mrs. Callister, you mustn't hesitate to use the choke chain."

Tim showed up at the hotel room fifteen hours later with a big smile on his face. I threw all of the chocolate flan I was eating right at him—and flan is a major source of simple carbohydrates. He wiped the chocolate off and proposed to me on the spot. It doesn't take much to figure this one out. He'd driven me crazy and turned me into an exact replica of his mother, punishing him with my tears and my rage. Do I have to say anything more about men who want to marry their mothers?

Jonathan is also a P.-A. We've been engaged for three years. He hasn't actually asked me to marry him—he's trying to enrage me first, by making me wait for his offer. But I'm smarter than I was in Mexico. I know how to hold my own in these relationships. I simply *tell* everyone he's my fiancé.

8:42. Jonathan thinks this is going to make me upset. I'm not upset. He can get here whenever he wants. He knows I'll just stare at him over dinner.

8:46. I'm down to half a cookie and three seaweed chips. This is precisely the kind of predicament Jonathan likes to put me in. If I leave to find a deli, he'll show up and I'll be gone, and when I return he'll say, "What do you mean I'm late? You weren't even here!"

The other night I saw a double bill of Sally Field and Julia Roberts trying to get away from their husbands. Sally's trapped in Iran, and Julia's stuck somewhere out on the Cape. Meanwhile, I'm sitting in the theatre, waiting for Jonathan.

8:48.23. People come and go, and my purse is devoid of nutrition. A man is standing two and a half feet from me, three inches into my personal-interaction area. Why do men do these things? This is not Jonathan, but this is a P.-A. That's why he's thumbing through the *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue, introducing a monokinied Elle Macpherson into my field of vision. This is a very angry man. If he were an *aggressive*-aggressive, he'd be doing something about his anger. He'd be out raping women. But oh, no, you're just a *passive*-aggressive, so you're standing here, shoving that magazine in my face, trying to make me feel bad about my body! I don't know why! I never saw you before! Well, you're not going to make me feel bad about my eating needs!

I can't believe it. Jonathan has me setting a new record. This is the worst hypoglycemic attack of my life. Either that, or it's the earthquake they are always predicting for New York City. Or maybe the ice caps have finally melted.

I will survive this. I deserve to survive this. I recycle! I buy only environmentally sound products for my cleaning lady to use! I eat only animals that have had the chance to move around a bit in their lives! Yes, I use sunblock that's been tested on cocker spaniels, but I think that's excusable! I deserve to have my co-op stay above water level! Dad, this is all your fault!

Jeanie! One drink!

I think it would be better for our relationship if I forgot your next birthday.

One little drink!

What about *my* needs?

8:53. These Korean grocery stores are always so busy, but I am entitled to stand here and eat. God, I love Ben & Jerry's. It's true, though, what the books say about other men. They just don't have it in them to give me what I need. I must empower myself. With every spoonful of Heath Bar Crunch, I am becoming stronger.

Jeanie!

You had your chance, Dad.

Jonathan can wait for me forever on that street corner, as far as I'm concerned. Because Ben and Jerry care. They care about the future of this planet. Every time you eat their ice cream you are also helping to save the rain forest. Ben and Jerry care about sustainable agriculture. They care about their employees. They care about educating visitors to their factory in Vermont. And they want me to become my own person.

—Polly Frost

SECOND QUESTION

THERE we were, in the transfusion room at the end of the corridor at Bishopgate Hospital: Friday morning, the patients being dripped with blood or intravenous medicine so they could go home for the weekend. It was February, and the snow outside had turned the gritty gray of dirty plaster. Ned and I stood at the window, flanking a card table filled with desserts: doughnuts, cakes, pies, brownies, cookies. Some plastic forks and knives were piled in stacks, others dropped pick-up-sticks style between the paper plates. Ned surveyed the table and took a doughnut. In his chair, Richard was sleeping, chin dropped, breathing through his mouth. Half an hour into the transfusion, he always fell asleep. He was one of the few who did. A tall, red-headed man, probably in his mid-fifties, was hearing from a nurse about the hair loss he could expect. "Just remember, honey, Tina Turner wears a wig," she said.

Outside, bigger snowflakes fell, like wadded-up tissues heading for the trash. Which was what I had turned away from when I went to the window: the sight of a nurse holding a tissue for a young woman to blow her nose into. The woman was vomiting, with her nose running at the same time, but she refused to relinquish the aluminum bowl clamped under her thumbs. "Into the tissue, honey," the nurse was still saying, not at all distracted by her posturing colleague's excellent imitation of Tina Turner. I'd stopped listening, too, but I'd stuck on the phrase "Gonna break every rule."

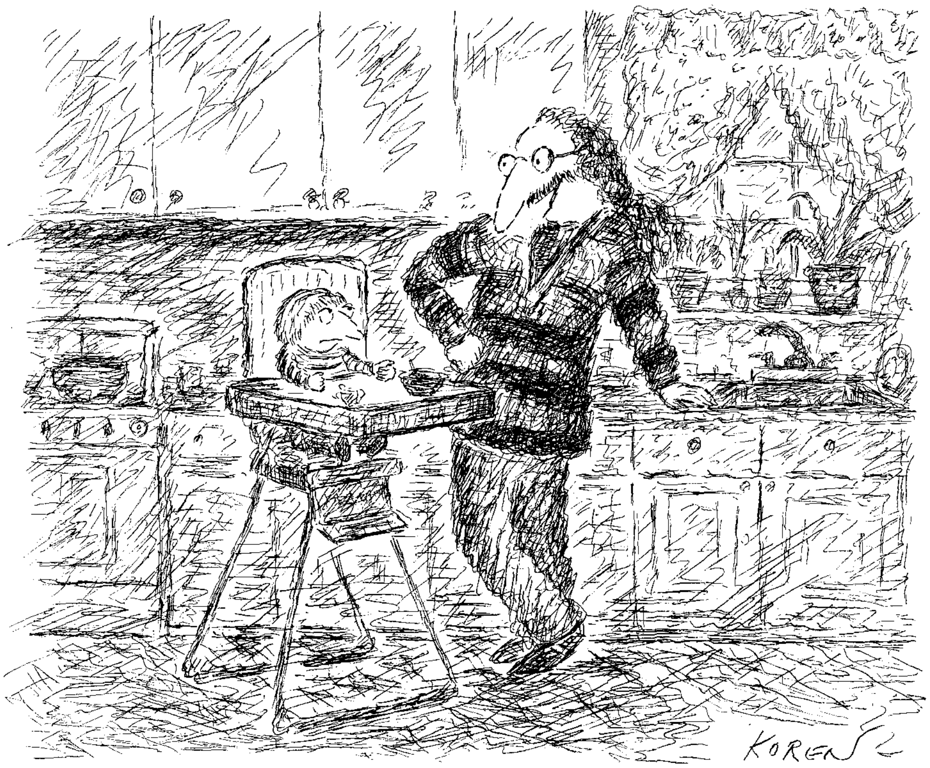
Richard was dying of AIDS. Ned, his ex-lover and longtime business associate, found that instead of reading scripts, typing letters, and making phone calls, his new job description was to place organically grown vegetables in yin/yang positions inside a special steamer, below which we boiled Poland Spring water. A few months earlier, in that period before Richard's AZT had to be discontinued so that he could enter an experimental out-patient-treatment program at Bishopgate, Ned had always slept late. He couldn't call the West Coast before two in the afternoon, anyway—or maybe an hour earlier, if he had the unlisted number of an actor or of a director's car phone. All of the people Richard and Ned did business with worked longer hours than nine-to-fivers, and it was a standing joke among us that I was never busy—I had no real job, and when I did work I was paid much more than was reasonable. Ned joked with me a lot, an edge in his voice, because he was a little jealous of the sudden presence of a third person in Richard's apartment. Richard and I had met in New York when we were seated in adjacent chairs at a cheapo haircutter's on Eighth Avenue. He thought I was an actress in an Off Broadway play he'd seen the night before. I was not, but I'd seen the play. As we talked, we discovered that we often ate at the same restaurants in Chelsea. His face was familiar to me, as well. Then began years of our being neighbors—a concept more important to New Yorkers than to people living in a small town. The day we met, Richard took me home with him so I could shower.

That year, my landlord on West Twenty-seventh Street remained unconcerned that hot water rarely made it up to my top-floor apartment. After I met Richard it became a habit with me to put on my sweatsuit and jog to his apartment, three blocks east and one block over. Richard's own landlord, who lived in the other second-floor apartment, could never do enough for him, because Richard had introduced him to some movie stars and invited him to so many screenings. He would sizzle with fury over the abuse I had to endure, working himself up to what Richard (who made *café filtre* for the three of us) swore was a caffeine-induced sexual high, after which he'd race around doing building maintenance. Now, in the too bright transfusion room, it was hard for me to believe that only a few months ago I'd been sitting in Richard's dining alcove, with the cluster of phones that rested on top of *Variety* landslides and formed the centerpiece of the long tavern table, sipping freshly ground Jamaica Blue Mountain as my white-gloved hands curved around the pleasant heat of a neon-colored coffee mug. The gloves allowed the lotion to sink in as long as possible. I make my living as a hand model. Every night, I rub on a mixture of Dal Raccolta olive oil with a dash of Kiehl's moisturizer and the liquid from two Vitamin E capsules. It was Richard who gave me the nickname Rac, for "raccoon." My white, pulled-on paws protect me from scratches, broken nails, chapped skin. Forget the M.B.A.: as everyone knows, real money is made in strange ways in New York.

"We're just ordinary folks, but we try not to make a big deal of it."

I turned away from the snowstorm. On a TV angled from a wall bracket above us, an orange-faced Phil Donahue glowed. He shifted from belligerence to incredulity as a man who repossessed cars explained his life philosophy. Hattie, the nicest nurse on the floor, stood beside me briefly, considering the array of pastry on our table as if it were a half-played chess game. Finally, she picked up one of the plastic knives, cut a brownie in half, and walked away without raising her eyes to look at the snow.

Taking the shuttle to Boston every weekend had finally convinced me that I was never going to develop any fondness for Beantown. To be fair about it, I didn't have much chance to see Boston as a place where anyone might be happy. Ned and I walked the path between the apartment (rented by the month) and the hospital. Once or twice I took a cab to the natural-food store, and one night, as irresponsible as the babysitters of every mother's nightmare, we had gone to a bar and then to the movies, while Richard slept a drug-induced sleep, with the starfish night-light Hattie had brought him from her honeymoon in Bermuda shining on the bedside table. In the bar, Ned had asked me what I'd do if time could stop: Richard wouldn't get any better and he wouldn't get any worse, and the days we'd gone through—with the crises, the circumlocutions, the gallows humor, the perplexity, the sudden, all-too-clear medical knowledge—would simply persist. Winter, also, would persist: intermittent snow, strong winds, the harsh late-afternoon sun we couldn't stand without the filter of a curtain. I was never a speculative person, but Ned thrived on speculation. In fact, he had studied poetry at Stanford, years ago, where he had written a series of "What If" poems. Richard, visiting California, answering questions onstage after one of the movies he'd produced had been screened, had suddenly found himself challenged by a student whose questions were complex and rhetorical. In the following fifteen years, they had been lovers, enemies, and finally best friends, associated in work. They had gone from Stanford to New York, New York to London, then from Hampstead Heath back to West Twenty-eighth Street, with side trips to gamble in Aruba and to ski in Aspen at Christmas.



"Have you determined yet whether you will or will not eat your cereal?"

"You're breaking the rules," I said. "No what ifs."

"What if we went outside and flowers were blooming, and there were a car—a convertible—and we drove to Plum Island," he went on. "Moon on the water. Big Dipper in the sky. Think about it. Visualize it and your negative energy will be replaced by helpful, healing energy."

"Is there such a place as Plum Island or did you make it up?"

"It's famous. Banana Beach is there. Bands play at night in the Prune Pavilion."

"There is a Plum Island," the man next to me said. "It's up by Newburyport. It's full of poison ivy in the summer, so you've got to be careful. I once got poison ivy in my lungs from some asshole who was burning the stuff with his leaves. Two weeks in the hospital, and me with a thousand-dollar deductible."

Ned and I looked at the man.

"Buy you a round," he said. "I just saved a bundle. The hotel I'm staying at gives you a rate equal to the temperature when you check in. It's a come-on. I've got a queen-size bed, an honor bar, and one of those showers you can adjust so it feels like needles shooting into you, all for sixteen dollars. I could live there cheaper than heating my house."

"Where you from?" Ned asked.

"Hope Valley, Rhode Island," the man said, his arm shooting in front of me to shake Ned's hand. "Harvey Milgrim," he said, nodding at my face. "Captain, United States Army Reserve."

"Harvey," Ned said, "I don't think you have any use for guys like me. I'm homosexual."

The man looked at me. I was surprised, too; it wasn't like Ned to talk about this with strangers. Circumstance had thrown me together with Ned; fate precipitated our unlikely bonding. Neither of us could think of life without Richard. Richard opened up to very few people, but when he did he made it a point to be indispensable.

"He's kidding," I said. It seemed the easiest thing to say.

"Dangerous joke," Harvey Milgrim said.

"He's depressed because I'm leaving him," I said.

"Well, now, I wouldn't rush into a thing like that," Harvey said. "I'm

Bud on draft. What are you two?"

The bartender walked over the minute the conversation shifted to alcohol.

"Stoli straight up," Ned said.

"Vodka tonic," I said.

"Switch me to Jim Beam," Harvey said. He rolled his hand with the quick motion of someone shaking dice. "Couple of rocks on the side."

"Harvey," Ned said, "my world's coming apart. My ex-lover is also my boss, and his white-blood-cell count is sinking too low for him to stay alive. The program he's in at Bishopgate is his last chance. He's a Friday-afternoon vampire. They pump blood into him so he has enough energy to take part in an experimental study and keep his out-patient status, but do you know how helpful that is? Imagine he's driving the Indy. He's in the lead. He screeches in for gas, and what does the pit crew do but blow him a kiss? The other cars are still out there, whipping past. He starts to yell, because they're supposed to fill the car with gas, but the guys are nuts or something. They just blow air kisses."

ALL BEARS

Are Dangerous. Enjoy Them—
say signs—At a Distance. What they want

is huckleberries,
salmonberries, bearberries,

areas of dense brush, heavy
forage, golden-

mantled ground squirrels, spawning
salmon full of eggs, corn

spilled from freight cars
on the Continental Divide, canned

spaghetti, freeze-dried
beef Stroganoff, anything

you've got. They want to know
whether you're predator

or prey, but what they really
prefer is carrion. They like

to roll in it. They may run off
and then return and pull you

out of a tree
like fruit and eat part

and stash the rest
for later. But remember:

it's not you
they're after—not the camper lying

zipped in his tent
in the rain, hearing the drops splashing

overhead like cloth
tearing, not the girl

cramped on the front seat
of the car, staring

into the black, seeing the thick
trunks rear up

and walk bipedally; not your watch,
not your wallet, not your waterproof

down coat. The bears, they could take you
or leave you alone

but for the fact
of what they can smell.

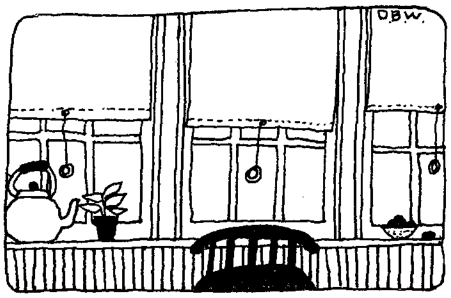
—Caroline Fraser

• •

Harvey looked at Ned's hand, the fingers fanned open, deep Vs of space between them. Then Ned slowly curled them in, kissing his fingernails as they came to rest on his bottom lip.

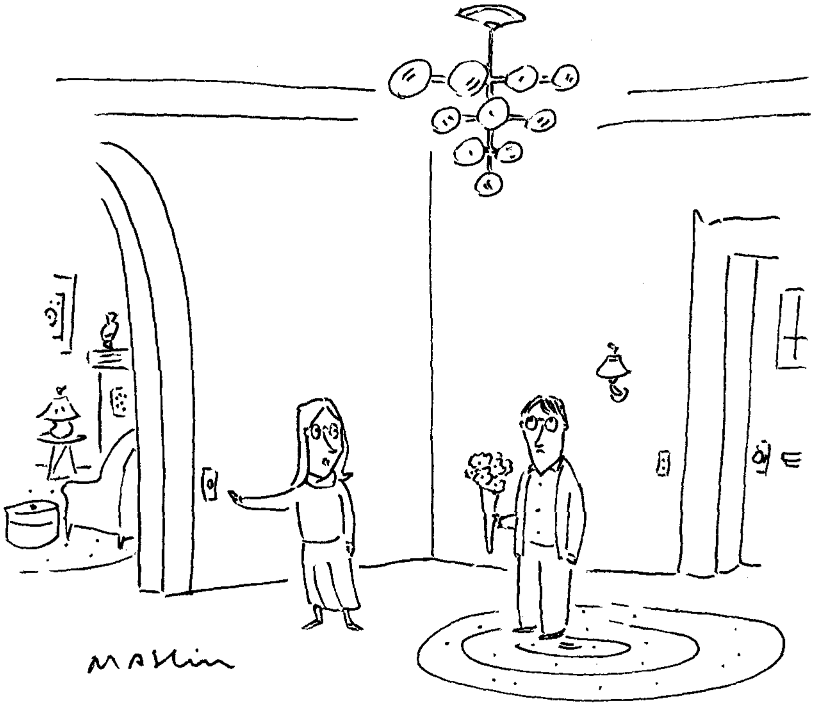
The bartender put the drinks down, one-two-three. He scooped a few ice cubes into a glass and put the glass beside Harvey's shot glass of bourbon. Harvey frowned, looking from glass to glass without saying anything. Then he threw down the shot of bourbon and picked up the other glass, lifted one ice cube out, and slowly sucked it. He did not look at us or speak to us again.

THE night after Ned and I snuck off to the bar, Richard started to hyperventilate. In a minute his pajamas were soaked, his teeth chattering. It was morning, 4 A.M. He was holding on to the doorframe, his feet in close, his body curved away, like someone windsurfing. Ned woke up groggily from his sleeping bag on the floor at the foot of Richard's bed. I was on the foldout sofa in the living room, again awakened by the slightest sound. Before I'd fallen asleep, I'd gone into the kitchen to get a drink of water, and a mouse had run under the refrigerator. It startled me, but then tears sprang to my eyes because if Richard knew there were mice—mice polluting the environment he was trying to purify with air ionizers, and humidifiers that misted the room with mineral water—he'd make us move. The idea of gathering up the piles of holistic-health books, the pamphlets on meditation, the countless jars of vitamins and chelated minerals and organically grown grains, the eye of God that hung over the stove, the passages he'd made Ned transcribe from Bernie Siegel and tape to the refrigerator—we'd already moved twice, neither time for any good reason. Something couldn't just scurry in and make us pack it all up again, could it? And where was there left to go anymore? He was too sick to be in a hotel, and I knew there was no other apartment anywhere near the hospital. We would have to persuade him that the mouse existed only in his head. We'd tell him he was hallucinating; we'd talk him out of it, in the same way we patiently tried to soothe him by explaining that the terror he was experiencing was only a nightmare. He was not in a plane that had crashed in the jungle; he was tangled in sheets, not weighed down with concrete.



When I got to the bedroom, Ned was trying to pry Richard's fingers off the doorframe. He was having no luck, and looked at me with an expression that had become familiar: fear, with an undercurrent of intense fatigue.

Richard's robe dangled from his bony shoulders. He was so wet that I



"Any objections to my throwing more light on your apology?"

thought at first he might have blundered into the shower. He looked in my direction but didn't register my presence. Then he sagged against Ned, who began to walk him slowly in the direction of the bed.

"It's cold," Richard said. "Why isn't there any heat?"

"We keep the thermostat at eighty," Ned said wearily. "You just need to get under the covers."

"Is that Hattie over there?"

"It's me," I said. "Ned is trying to get you into the bed."

"Rac," Richard said vaguely. He said to Ned, "Is that my bed?"

"That's your bed," Ned said. "You'll be warm if you get into bed, Richard."

I came up beside Richard and patted his back, and walked around and sat on the edge of the bed, trying to coax him forward. Ned was right: it was dizzyingly hot in the apartment. I got up and turned back the covers, smoothing the contour sheet. Ned kept Richard's hand, but turned to face him as he took one step backward, closer to the bed. The two of us pantomimed our pleasure at the bed's desirability. Richard began to walk toward it, licking his lips.

"I'll get you some water," I said.

"Water," Richard said. "I thought we were on a ship. I thought the bathroom was an inside cabin with no window. I can't be where there's no way to see the sky."

Ned was punching depth back into Richard's pillows. Then he made a fist and punched the center of the bed. "All aboard the S.S. Fucking A.," he said.

It got a fake laugh out of me as I turned into the kitchen, but Richard only began to whisper urgently about the claustrophobia he'd experienced in the bathroom. Finally he did get back in his bed and immediately fell asleep. Half an hour later, still well before dawn, Ned repeated Richard's whisperings to me as if they were his own. Though Ned and I were very different people, our ability to imagine Richard's suffering united us. We were sitting in wooden chairs we'd pulled away from the dining-room table to put by the window so Ned could smoke. His cigarette smoke curled out the window.

"Ever been to Mardi Gras?" he said.

"New Orleans," I said, "but never Mardi Gras."

"They use strings of beads for barter," he said. "People stand up on the balconies in the French Quarter—women as well as men, sometimes—and they holler down for people in the crowd to flash 'em: you give them a thrill, they toss down their beads. The more you show, the more you win. Then you can walk around with all your necklaces and everybody will know you're real foxy. *Real* cool. You do a bump-and-grind, you can get the good ole boys—the men, that is—and the transvestites all whistling together and throwing down the long necklaces. The real long ones are the ones everybody wants. They're like having a five-carat-diamond ring." He opened the window another few inches so he could stub out his cigarette. One-fingered, he flicked it to the ground. Then he lowered the window, not quite pushing it shut. This wasn't one of Ned's wild stories; I was sure what he'd just told me was true. Sometimes I thought Ned told me certain stories to titillate me, or perhaps to put me down in some way: to remind me that I was straight and he was gay.

"You know what I did one time?" I said suddenly, deciding to see if I could shock him for once. "When I was having that affair with Harry? One night we were in his apartment—his wife was off in Israel—and he was cooking dinner, and I was going through her jewelry box. There was a pearl necklace in there. I couldn't figure out how to open the clasp, but finally I realized I could just drop it over my head carefully. When Harry hollered for me, I had all my clothes off and was lying on the rug, in the dark, with my arms at my side. Finally he came after me. He put on the light and saw me, and then he started laughing and sort of dove onto me, and the pearl necklace broke. He raised up and said, 'What have I done?' and I said, 'Harry, it's your wife's necklace.' He didn't even know she had it. She must not have worn it. So he started cursing, crawling around to pick up the pearls, and I thought, No, if he has it restrung at least I'm going to make sure it won't be the same length."

Ned and I turned our heads to see Richard, his robe neatly knotted in front, knee socks pulled on, his hair slicked back.

"What are you two talking about?" he said.

"Hey, Richard," Ned said, not managing to disguise his surprise.

"I don't smell cigarette smoke, do I?" Richard said.

"It's coming from below," I said, closing the window.

"We weren't talking about you,"

Ned said. His voice was both kind and wary.

"I didn't say you were," Richard said. He looked at me. "May I be included?"

"I was telling him about Harry," I said. "The story about the pearls." More and more, it seemed, we were relying on stories.

"I never liked him," Richard said. He waved a hand toward Ned. "Open that a crack, will you? It's too hot in here."

"You already know the story," I said to Richard, anxious to include him. "You tell Ned the punch line."

Richard looked at Ned. "She ate them," he said. "When he wasn't looking she ate as many as she could."

"I didn't want them to fit anymore if she tried to put them over her head," I said. "I wanted her to know something had happened."

Richard shook his head, but fondly: a little gesture he gave to indicate that I was interchangeable with some gifted, troublesome child he never had.

"One time, when I was on vacation with Sander, I picked up a trick in Puerto Rico," Ned said. "We were going at it at this big estate where the guy's employer lived, and suddenly the guy, the employer, hears something and starts up the stairs. So I ran into the closet—"

"He played football in college," Richard said.

I smiled, but I had already heard this story. Ned had told it at a party one night long ago, when he was drunk. It was one of the stories he liked best, because he appeared a little wild in it and a little cagey, and because somebody got his comeuppance. His stories were not all that different from those stories boys had often confided in me back in my college days—stories about dates and sexual conquests, told with ellipses to spare my delicate feelings.

"So I grabbed whatever was hanging behind me—just grabbed down a wad of clothes—and as the guy comes into the room, I throw open the door and spring," Ned was saying. "Buck naked, I start out running, and here's my bad luck: I slam right into him and knock him out. Like it's a cartoon or something. I know he's out cold, but I'm too terrified to think straight, so I keep on running. Turns out what I've grabbed is a white pleated shirt and a thing like a—what do you call those jackets the Japanese wear? Comes halfway down my thighs, thank God."

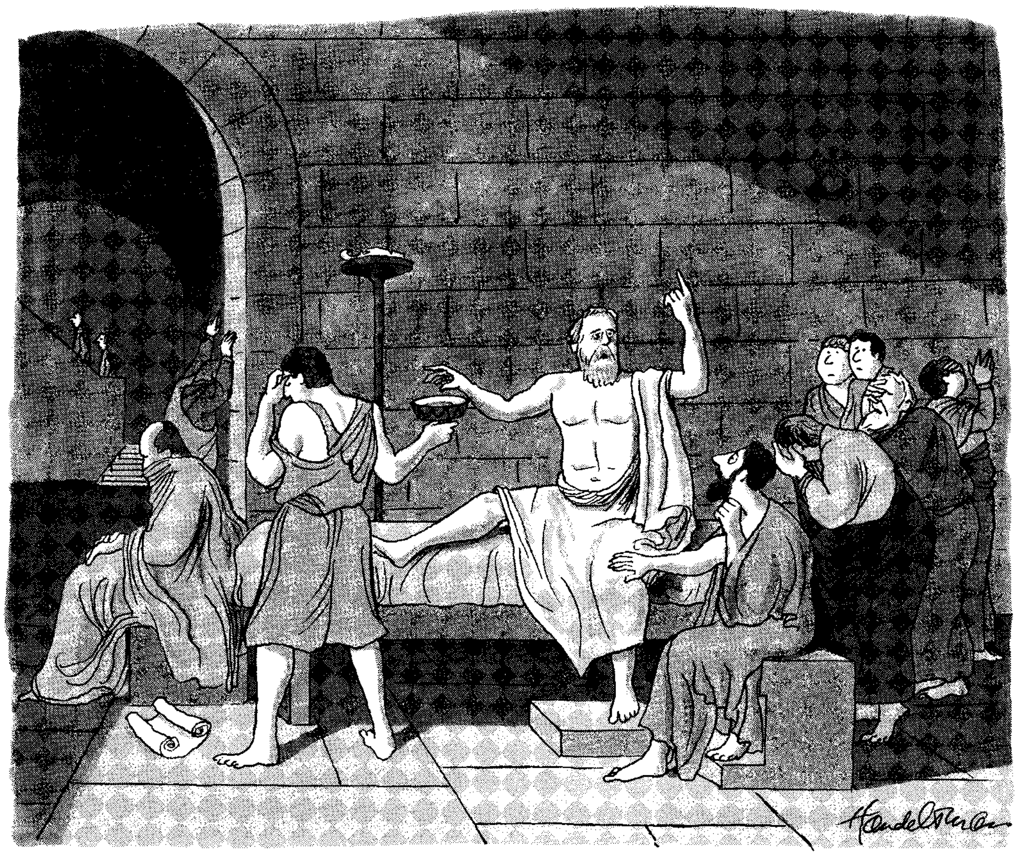
"These are the things he thanks God for," Richard said to me.

Ned got up, growing more animated. "It's *all* like a cartoon. There's a dog in the yard that sets out after me, but the thing is on a *chain.* He reaches the end of the chain and just rises up in the air, baring his teeth, but he can't go anywhere. So I stand right there, inches in front of the dog, and put on the shirt and tie the jacket around me, and then I stroll over to the gate and slip the latch, and about a quarter of a mile later I'm outside some hotel. I go in and go to the men's room to clean up, and that's the first time I realize I've got a broken nose."

Although I had heard the story before, this was the first mention of Ned's broken nose. For a few seconds he seemed to lose steam, as if he himself were tired of the story, but then he started up again, revitalized.

"And here's the rest of my good luck: I come out and the guy on the desk is a fag. I tell him I've run into a problem and will he please call my boyfriend at the hotel where we're staying, because I don't even have a coin to use the pay phone. So he looks up the number of the hotel, and he dials it and hands me the phone. They connect me with Sander, who is sound asleep, but he snaps to right away, screaming, 'Another night on the town with a prettyboy? Suddenly the bars close and Ned realizes his wallet's back at the hotel? And do you think I'm going to come get you, just because you and some pickup don't have money to pay the bill?' "

Eyes wide, Ned turned first to me, then to Richard, playing to a full house. "While he was ranting, I had time to think. I said, 'Wait a minute, Sander. You mean they didn't get anything? You mean I left my wallet at the hotel?' " Ned sank into his chair. "Can you believe it? I'd actually left my fuckin' wallet in our room, so all I had to do was pretend to Sander that I'd gotten mugged—sons of bitches made me strip and ran off with my pants. Then I told him



"In accepting this hemlock, I should like to thank the entire team for its dedication in making 'the Socratic method' a byword. And, of course, my devoted wife, Xanthippe."

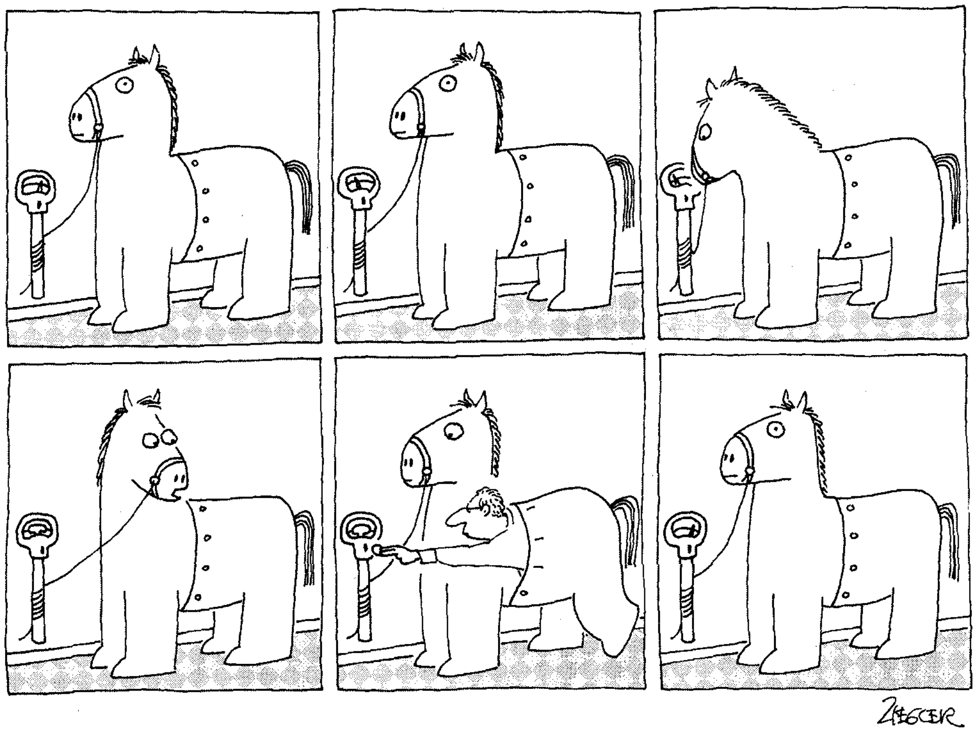
that the guy at the hotel gave me the kimono to put on." He clicked his fingers. "That's what they're called: 'kimonos.' "

"He didn't ask why a kimono?" Richard said wearily. He ran his hand over the stubble of his beard. His feet were tucked beside him on the sofa.

"Sure. And I tell him it's because there's a Japanese restaurant in the hotel, and if you want to wear kimonos and sit on the floor Japanese style, they let you. And the bellboy thought they'd never miss a kimono."

"He believed you?" Richard said.

"Sander? He grew up in L.A. and spent the rest of his life in New York. He knew you had to believe everything. He drives me back to the hotel saying how great it is that the scum that jumped me didn't get any money. The sun's coming up, and we're riding along in the rental car, and he's holding my hand." Ned locked his thumbs together. "Sander and I are like *that* again."



In the silence, the room seemed to shrink around us. Sander died in 1985.

"I'm starting to feel cold," Richard said. "It comes up my body like somebody's rubbing ice up my spine."

I got up and sat beside him, half hugging him, half massaging his back.

"There's that damn baby again," Richard said. "If that's their first baby, I'll bet they never have another one."

Ned and I exchanged looks. The only sound, except for an intermittent hiss of steam from the radiator, was the humming of the refrigerator.

"What happened to your paws, Rac?" Richard said to me.

I looked at my hands, thumbs pressing into the muscles below his shoulders. For the first time in as long as I could remember, I'd forgotten to put on the lotion and the gloves before going to sleep. I was also reflexively doing something I'd trained myself not to do years ago. My insurance contract said I couldn't use my hands that way: no cutting with a knife, no washing dishes, no making the bed, no polishing the furniture. But I kept pressing my thumbs into Richard's back, rubbing them back and forth. Even after Ned dropped the heavy blanket over Richard's trembling shoulders, I kept pressing some resistance to his hopeless dilemma deep into the bony ladder of Richard's spine.

"It's crazy to hate a baby for crying," Richard said, "but I really hate that baby."

Ned spread a blanket over Richard's lap, then tucked it around his legs. He sat on the floor and bent one arm around Richard's blanketed shins. "Richard," he said quietly, "there's no baby. We've gone through the building floor by floor, to humor you. That noise you get in your ears when your blood pressure starts to drop must sound to you like a baby crying."

"O.K.," Richard said, shivering harder. "There's no baby. Thank you for telling me. You promised you'd always tell me the truth."

Ned looked up. "Truth? From the guy who just told the Puerto Rico story?"

"Or maybe you're hearing something in the pipes, Richard," I said. "Sometimes the radiators make noise."

Richard nodded hard, in agreement. But he didn't quite hear me. That was what Ned and I had found out about people who were dying: their minds always raced past whatever was being said, and still the pain went faster, leapfrogging ahead.

TWO days later, Richard was admitted to the hospital with a high fever, and went into a coma from which he never awoke. His brother flew to Boston that night, to be with him. His godson, Jerry, came, too, getting there in time to go with us in the cab. The experimental treatment hadn't worked. Of course, we still had no way of knowing—we'll never know—whether Richard had been given the polysyllabic medicine we'd come to call "the real stuff," or whether he'd been part of the control group. We didn't know whether the priest from Hartford was getting the real stuff, either, though it was rumored among us that his flushed face was a good sign. And what about the young veterinarian who always had something optimistic to say when we ran into each other in the transfusion room? Like Clark Kent, with his secret "S" beneath his shirt, the vet wore a T-shirt with a photograph reproduced on the front, a snapshot of him hugging his Border collie on the day the dog took a blue ribbon. He told me he wore it every Friday for good luck, as he sat in oncology getting the I.V. drip that sometimes gave him the strength to go to a restaurant with a friend that night.

Ned and I, exhausted from another all-nighter, took the presence of Richard's brother and godson as an excuse to leave the hospital and go get a cup of coffee. I felt light-headed, though, and asked Ned to wait for me in the lobby while I went to the bathroom. I thought some cold water on my face might revive me.

There were two teen-age girls in the bathroom. As they talked, it turned out they were sisters and had just visited their mother, who was in the oncology ward down the hall. Their boyfriends were coming to pick them up, and there was a sense of excitement in the air as one sister teased her hair into a sort of plume, and the other took off her torn stockings and threw them away, then rolled her knee-length skirt up to make it a micromini. "Come on, Mare," her sister, standing at the mirror, said, though she was taking her time fixing her own hair. Mare reached into her cosmetic bag and took out a little box. She opened it and began to quickly streak a brush over the rectangle of color inside. Then, to my amazement, she began to swirl the brush over both knees, to make them blush. As I washed and dried my face, a fog of hair spray filtered down. The girl at the mirror fanned the air, put the hair spray back in her purse, then picked up a tube of lipstick, opened it, and parted her lips. As Mare straightened up after one last swipe at her knees, she knocked her sister's arm, so that the lipstick shot slightly above her top lip.

"Jesus! You feeb!" the girl said shrilly. "Look what you made me *do*."

"Meet you at the car," her sister said, grabbing the lipstick and tossing it into her makeup bag. She dropped the bag in her purse and almost skipped out, calling back, "Soap and water's good for that!"

"What a bitch," I said, more to myself than to the girl who remained.

"Our mother's dying, and she doesn't care," the girl said. Tears began to well up in her eyes.

"Let me help you get it off," I said, feeling more light-headed than I had when I'd come in. I felt as if I were sleepwalking.

The girl faced me, mascara smudged in half-moons beneath her eyes, her nose bright red, one side of her lip more pointed than the other. From the look in her eyes, I was just a person who happened to be in the room. The way I had happened to be in the room in New York the day Richard came out of the bathroom, one shirtsleeve rolled up, frowning, saying, "What do you think this rash is on my arm?"

"I'm all right," the girl said, wiping her eyes. "It's not your problem."

"I'd say she does care," I said. "People get very anxious in hospitals. I came in to throw some water on my face because I was feeling a little faint."

"Do you feel better now?" she said.

"Yes," I said.

"We're not the ones who are dying," she said.

It was a disembodied voice that came from some faraway, perplexing place, and it disturbed me so deeply that I needed to hold her for a moment—which I did, tapping my forehead lightly against hers and slipping my fingers through hers to give her a squeeze before I walked out the door.

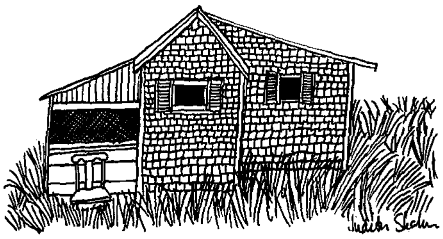
Ned had gone outside and was leaning against a lamppost. He pointed the glowing tip of his cigarette to the right, asking silently if I wanted to go to the coffee shop down the block. I nodded, and we fell into step.

"I don't think this is a walk we're going to be taking too many more times," he said. "The doctor stopped to talk, on his way out. He's run out of anything optimistic to say. He also took a cigarette out of my fingers and crushed it under his heel, told me I shouldn't smoke. I'm not crazy about doctors, but there's still something about that one that I like. Hard to imagine I'd ever warm up to a guy with tassels on his shoes."

It was freezing cold. At the coffee shop, hot air from the electric heater over the door smacked us in the face as we headed for our familiar seats at the counter. Just the fact that it wasn't the hospital made it somehow pleasant, though it was only a block and a half away. Some of the doctors and nurses went there, and of course people like us—patients' friends and relatives. Ned nodded when the waitress asked if we both wanted coffee.

"Winter in Boston," Ned said. "Never knew there was anything worse than winter where I grew up, but I think this is worse."

"Where did you grow up?"



"Kearney, Nebraska. Right down Route 80, about halfway between Lincoln and the Wyoming border."

"What was it like, growing up in Nebraska?"

"I screwed boys," he said.

It was either the first thing that popped into his head, or he was trying to make me laugh.

"You know what the first thing fags always ask each other is, don't you?" he said.

I shook my head no, braced for a joke.

"It's gotten so the second thing is 'Have you been tested?' But the first thing is still always 'When did you know?' "

"O.K.," I said. "Second question."

"No," he said, looking straight at me. "It can't happen to me."

"Be serious," I said. "That's not a serious answer."

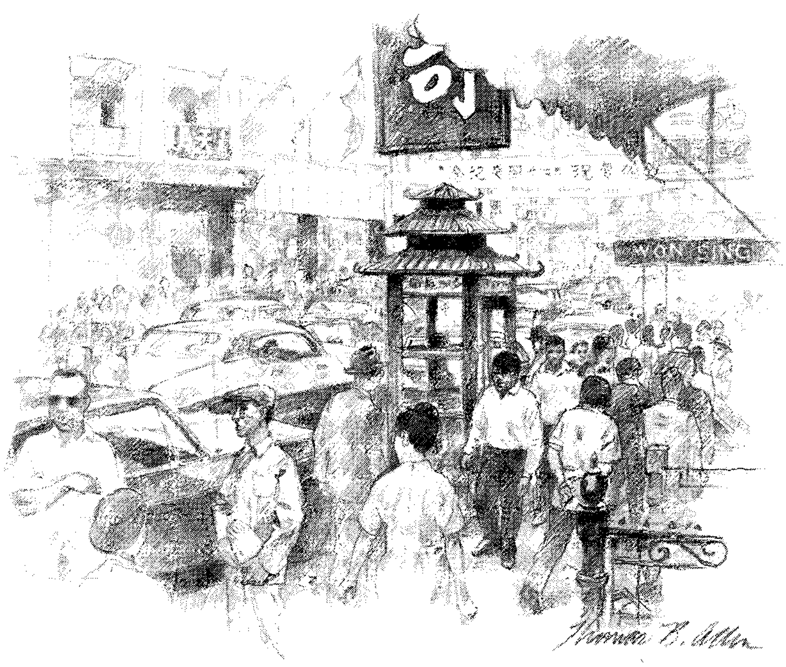
He cupped his hand over mine. "How the hell do you think I got out of Kearney, Nebraska?" he said. "Yeah, I had a football scholarship, but I had to hitchhike to California—never been to another state but Wyoming—hitched with whatever I had in a laundry bag. And if a truck driver put a hand on my knee, you don't think I knew that was a small price to pay for a ride? Because luck was with me. I always knew that. Just the way luck shaped those pretty hands of yours. Luck's always been with me, and luck's with you. It's as good as anything else we have to hang on to."

He lifted his hand from mine, and yes, there it was: the perfect hand, with smooth skin, tapered fingers, and nails curved and shining under the gloss of a French manicure. There was a small, dark smudge across one knuckle. I licked the middle finger of the other hand to see if I could gently rub it away, that smudge of mascara that must have passed from the hand of the girl in the bathroom to my hand when our fingers interwove as we awkwardly embraced. The girl I had been watching, all the time Ned and I sat talking. She was there in the coffee shop with us—I'd seen them come in, the two sisters and their boyfriends—her hair neatly combed, her eyes sparkling, her makeup perfectly stroked on. Though her sister tried to get their attention, both boys hung on her every word.

—ANN BEATTIE

A REPORTER AT LARGE

CHINATOWN—I



AT the southern end of Manhattan is the largest Chinese community in the Western Hemisphere. The crooked streets of one of New York's oldest ghettos smell of salt and fish and orange peel. This booming, chaotic little piece of China, overflowing with new immigrants, is a remarkably self-contained neighborhood—virtually a nation unto itself. To a degree almost impossible for outsiders to comprehend, most of its inhabitants lead lives segregated from the rest of America.

The new arrivals overwhelming Chinatown are part of the biggest wave of Asian immigrants in American history, the consequence of a momentous change in immigration policy several decades ago. In 1965, laws that had for more than eighty years barred many Chinese and, for half that time, almost all Asians while admitting large numbers of Europeans were replaced by Congress with a quota for the Eastern Hemisphere that is significantly larger than that for the Western Hemisphere. Since then, Asians have become the leading immigrants. Chinese, the second-largest Asian group, after Filipinos, to immigrate under the new law, head straight to New York, their first choice among cities in the United States. With some fourteen hundred people arriving every month, Chinatown has burst out of its former confines below Canal Street, sprawled into SoHo, and spawned satellite communities in Brooklyn and in Flushing, Queens. About a hundred and fifty thousand Chinese live in Chinatown, and another hundred and fifty thousand live in the outer boroughs. In addition to immigrants from Taiwan and the People's Republic of China, Chinese from Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Cuba, South America, and the Philippines have come, bringing their various dialects. Northern Chinese and Taiwanese speak Mandarin, while those from southern China speak Cantonese. Many of the new immigrants cannot understand each other. Cantonese, who were among the earliest settlers, complain of being strangers in an all-Asian stew. Still, the residents make their way about Chinatown's two square miles of tenements with little mutual rancor.

They have turned Chinatown into the city's clothing-manufacturing center. Its nearly six hundred factories have an annual payroll well over two hundred million dollars. It is also an important jewelry district now, with annual sales of a hundred million dollars in gold and diamonds. Its three hundred restaurants draw tourists and conventioneers. And it has become the center of Chinese organized crime in the United States. The Justice Department ranks Chinese organized crime as the principal rival of the Cosa Nostra, and in some lines of business it has supplanted the Cosa Nostra. The French Connection, the old heroin-smuggling route from Turkey to New York by way of Marseilles, has been replaced by the Chinese Connection, which begins at the Golden Triangle, the area where Laos and Thailand and Burma meet, and continues, generally through Hong Kong, to Chinatown. Half of the heroin smuggled into this country is under the control of organized crime in Chinatown.

The portal to Chinatown is Mott Street. At the intersection of Mott and Canal is a concrete building with a pagoda roof and several of the painted balconies characteristic of Chinese architecture. This building houses the tong, or fraternal organization, of the On Leong, the Chinese Merchants Association. Down the street and around the corner, on Pell Street, is a brick building with green fire escapes and a large green sign bearing gold calligraphy. (Green symbolizes growth; gold symbolizes prosperity.) This is the Hip Sing tong. A block east, on Division Street, is the Tung On. These three organizations are referred to by both residents and law-enforcement officials as the Chinese Mafia. Their members run social events and support community activities, and some sanction crimes that keep Chinatown in a stranglehold. Each tong is affiliated with a "standing army," a gang of between thirty and fifty members. Much of the activity that goes on around these streets no one ever hears about or reads about; most of it is not reported even in Chinatown's four Chinese-language daily newspapers. The crimes that take place here are often so serious and so bizarre that the area sometimes resembles Hong Kong at its wildest. In Chinatown, there is a social order so ruthless that its very existence seems to be against the law, but, because the area is so isolated from the rest of society, most of the people who live here accept it as normal.

For months, I roamed the streets, trying to find people who would talk to me. For a long time, no new immigrants would speak to me. I was a *low faan*, an object of fear, distrust, indifference. Any outsider in Chinatown is called a *low faan*, which is short for *guey low faan*, or "barbarian"—a term that has been in use since the community's beginnings, in the eighteen-seventies. Chinatown's inhabitants are largely first-generation—eighty per cent of them are foreign-born, half of these having been here less than five years—and they are as ethnocentric as the first Chinese who settled Mott Street. "Because you are a barbarian, we don't have to care too much about you," one resident candidly told me. "Because you are a barbarian, some of us may be scared of you—we don't know your language, why you are the way you are." Others assured me that the term *low faan* had lost its pejorative meaning, and merely conveyed the superior exclusiveness with which Chinese have regarded all outsiders for centuries. "Did you understand when Chinese call white people *bot guey*, 'white devils,' or *guey low*, 'foreign devils'?" an elderly resident asked. "It's not meant to insult or dishonor. We say *low faan* so much—we refer to all whites as 'demons'—because we think it's the right term for them. Their noses are so huge and their eyes so blue. Chinese are unlike others—they think China is the center of the earth." Eva Tan, who was a special adviser on Asian affairs to Mayor Edward Koch, says, "Don't forget, foreigners forced China to open up and be ruled by gunboat diplomacy. We have been living for years with foreigners looking down on us. You must have heard of the famous signs at foreigners' hotels in China: 'Chinese and Dogs Not Allowed.' " Long-term Chinatown residents, remembering the racism they were subjected to in this country, use *low faan* with the sting of bitterness. New immigrants, to whom Chinatown represents a chance to rise out of poverty, use it matter-of-factly, descriptively, to mean "non-Chinese." The universal use of *low faan* in Chinatown was my first sign of its closed and secret life.

BLACK DIAMOND

The peaceful harmony of a Sunday morning
Filled with the colors of an apparent silence
The landscape outside green and blue the sun
Hidden behind the occasional chiming from a church
And in the bedroom a presence that is leaving
A goodbye floating in the air like

The last ribbon of cigarette smoke . . .
Once the door has shut one is back in front of the wall
Mirror that reflects neither the window nor the world
Brutally impenetrable where one can nonetheless paint
The dark the flashing and the two infinities
The musics the words the unreal and the true
The breath of life fleeting vapor
The burning heart burnt in the sparkle of a black diamond.

There is a bed in all our days
A sudden fall a difficult descent
Always as many days as we live an hour
Where we leave day to begin the never finished
Apprenticeship of night.

Stagnating in this leisure of our vigil other
Pictures lose us broken landscapes forgotten
Faces and the monsters of our previous meetings
With the images the bedroom wall beams back to us
Facing the window of which it is not the reflection.

The enclosed garden the iris the rose of Sharon
The water in the birdbath where the fat robin fusses
The train whistle the country down to the river
The full moon and its eddies of blue cloud
All the earth and only we to know that we sleep
Always alone once our eyelids are shut
And the nothingness which will leave off lasting. . . .

—PIERRE MARTORY

(*Translated, from the French, by John Ashbery.*)

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I particularly wanted to talk to Chinatown's "invisible" people, the new immigrants working in its garment factories and restaurants, who speak no English. With the help of my translator, Connie Pang, who is a Columbia University graduate student from Hong Kong, and, like all educated Hong Kongese, speaks both Mandarin and Cantonese, I slowly found people whose confidence I was able to gain. Very slowly. One merchant talked to us because every Friday for a month I had passed her store and smiled and waved at her young niece, who was newly arrived from Canton, though the niece had said that she herself had no time to speak to me. The merchant, after getting used to the sight of me, decided that I must be interested in her business. I was the first white person she had spoken to in twelve years of living in Chinatown. Another resident agreed, after four or five invitations, to have dinner with Connie and me, because I'd met his daughter and admired her cheerful spirit. He, too, had not had a conversation with a white person since arriving in Chinatown, six years ago. Chinatown's professional class is large—the local business directory lists a hundred and forty-four lawyers, fifty dentists, and more than a hundred accountants—but many of its members wanted no part of a *low faan* with a notebook. I got used to having people hang up on me, walk away from me, give me "white eyes" (turn up their eyeballs and show me only the whites of their eyes, which is the Chinese way of

ignoring strangers), and duck my questions with the handy excuse, in English, that they spoke no English. In one of Chinatown's oldest stores, I asked a clerk when it was built, and got a stony stare. I asked again. The same stare. I asked at another store, down the street, and got an explanation: "Oh, they think you're the tax lady or the government inspector." So few whites hang around Chinatown that any who do are assumed to be there on police or government business, and people shut off automatically at the sight of a white person—especially one asking questions.

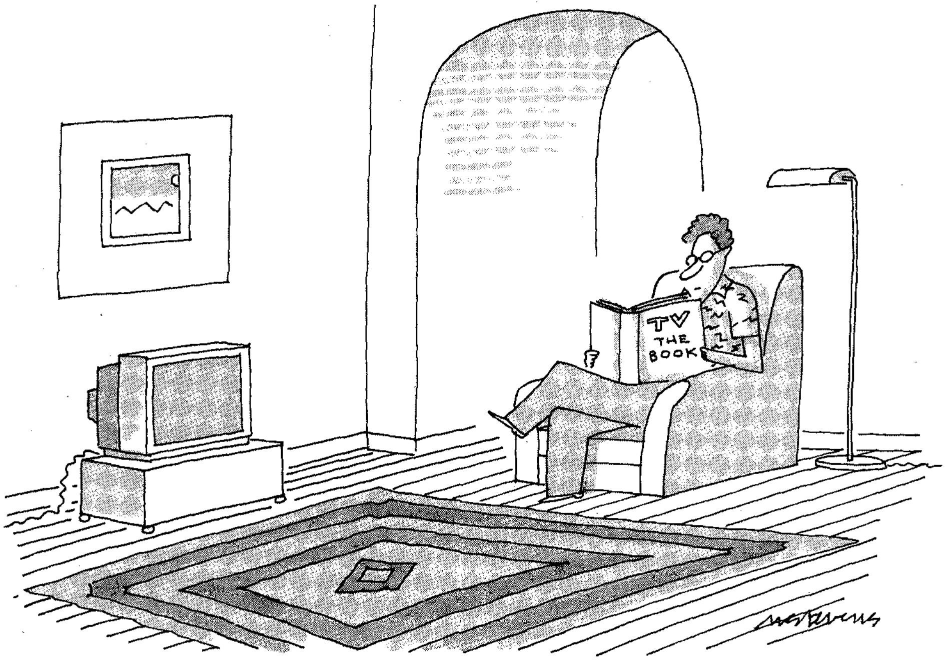
Emile Bocian was, until he retired recently, the editor of the Chinese-language daily *United Journal*, and was one of the few Caucasians living and working in Chinatown who are accepted by the community. Bocian made a little noise, like a snort, when I asked him why only two or three white people had studied the community in the last hundred and twenty years. "The reporters get lost," he said. "They get into quicksand and they disappear. Unless Chinese know the interviewers, they won't talk. That's why you have Chinese interviewing Chinese. The Chinese laugh at the stories that come out of Chinatown. Most are inaccurate."

"I'm not as old or as young as you think I am."

Teachers, social workers, police, census-takers, letter carriers all report similar difficulties. New immigrants have come from societies where terror taught them to keep their heads down and their mouths shut. The Chinese from Southeast Asia, for instance, were often the first to be kicked out of their countries in the political turmoil that arose in that region after the Second World War. In nearly every one of those countries, Chinese controlled the retail trade, and often the economy, but refused to assimilate, and they were widely resented. According to "Strangers from a Different Shore," by Ronald Takaki, a historian at the University of California, Berkeley, Chinese in Vietnam constituted seven per cent of the population but controlled eighty per cent of the retail trade. They spoke Chinese, sent their children to Chinese schools, and lived in Chinatowns. They were always targets of discrimination in Vietnamese society, but they suffered disproportionately as the Communists nationalized the economy. Fifty thousand Chinese from Vietnam—boat people, mostly—are estimated to have settled in New York City since the late seventies. Thriving again as small businessmen, they don't want to risk more discrimination here by standing out. Other ethnic Chinese, including, recently, a great many from Malaysia, are undocumented, and afraid to tell strangers their names. Still others, notably Fujianese, from China's Fujian Province, have been smuggled in, and are terrified of any notice. "You have to be like a hunting dog," one weary Chinese census-taker told the *Times* last year as she trudged about the tenements in Chinatown, finding everywhere illegal aliens living in unmarked apartments. Perhaps one of every five people in Chinatown is there illegally.

Far and away the largest number of new arrivals are from the People's Republic of China. Under the 1965 immigration law, each country in the Eastern Hemisphere has a quota of twenty thousand immigrants per year. In 1982, three years after the United States established full diplomatic relations with the People's Republic, it was given a quota separate from Taiwan's. The mainland Chinese in Chinatown are mostly from farms, and they especially shrink from contact with other people—even with other Chinese. "They don't want people to know them," one Chinatown resident told me. "The government uses the people against each other in China. That's how it gains its information—even within families. I've been waiting for several years for some people to return my friendship." Peter Lee, a reporter who has covered Chinatown for a decade, said, "This is a new and foreign thing for us, this freedom of expression and freedom of speech. The June 4th movement was fought for that. If one and a half billion people in China don't have those freedoms, then we don't have them here, either. It's not in our culture, it's not in our blood."

Scholars believe that at least eight hundred thousand people died in Mao Zedong's campaigns of the early nineteen-fifties to liquidate the landowning class, silence dissenters, and root out corruption, and that more than twenty million died in the famines of the late fifties and early sixties resulting from the disastrous Great Leap Forward. Half a million are thought to have been killed in the Cultural Revolution, and perhaps as many as a thousand in Beijing in the Tiananmen Square massacre and its aftermath, with several thousand more imprisoned, in China's vast gulag system, for supporting the pro-democracy movement. Four decades of political upheaval since the Communist revolution of 1949 have given immigrants a horror of speaking



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their minds, taking a stand, or asserting an opinion—and, underneath the fear, a passionate admiration for those who died for doing so, like the students in Tiananmen Square. Sherman Eng, an immigrant from Hong Kong who is the head of an association of Chinatown garment factories, reminded me that China's authoritarian governments have always devoured the outspoken: "I have a right to exercise my right to free speech, but a lot of Chinese people don't think that, because they were controlled by emperors for four thousand years, and if they said the wrong thing, insulted the emperor, they would die. A lot of Chinese don't talk. Just afraid to say the wrong thing."

Chinese prize self-effacement. Even Chinese who grew up singing "I am Mao's little soldier" in school hold to Confucian values; Communism has failed to shift the traditional Confucian loyalty from the family to the state. With the family the sacrosanct center of the culture, the individual is of no account. The proper Chinese says, "I am an ant." In a garment factory, I asked a seamstress her name. She blushed, hid her face, and began to sweat. I could not coax one word from her. Her neighbor, too, broke out in a sweat and shook her head. "Not the Chinese girls," said their boss, who was also a young Chinese woman but was from Hong Kong and not, like her workers, from the People's Republic. "They don't want to be in the newspaper. It's a tradition. Usually, they don't want to expose themselves to view. They are afraid someone will recognize them on the street."

Being interviewed or expressing one's individuality in any way is generally frowned upon, because it means committing the cardinal sin in Asian cultures: losing face. It puts one in a position of prominence, which causes jealousy in one's neighbors. Harold Ha, the first Chinese jeweller in Chinatown, is one of a handful of new millionaires to have risen from Chinatown since the immigration laws changed. But Ha no longer sells jewelry wholesale to Chinatown merchants, his former clients, because they are too resentful of his success—he has a ten-million-dollar business, a midtown factory, and factories in Shanghai and Nanjing—to buy from him. "In American culture, you successful, everybody follow you. In our culture, they try to destroy you," Ha says. "We don't like to stand out." Hoi Pei Lee, a businessman, says, "Americans like to show off. The Chinese don't. We think stay low key so we will have the least obstacles to success. We have an expression. When you have a glass of water, if it's empty, you shake, it don't make no sound. When you have a full jar, you shake, it don't make any noise, either. When you are really rich, you don't say anything. When you are really poor, you don't say anything, either." Prominence also invites supernatural evil. In Chinese cosmology, *yein*, or evil spirits, constantly hover, ready to snatch good fortune from boasters. Chinese mothers curse their babies to save them from the *yein*.

Many new arrivals are unaware that the United States is governed differently from China, and that they have a right here to free speech. Seward Park High School is the largest high school in Chinatown; just over half of the students are Asian, primarily Chinese. Students enroll within a week or two of their arrival in New York, and for most of them classes are their introduction to America. Teachers in the bilingual instruction program say that their students arrive knowing little about this country. I met with some of the program's staff members one day, and they all spoke of the students' lack of understanding of life in the United States. "They come here blind," Katherine Sid, the program's director, told me. "They come because their relatives say this is a better life. They're thinking in economic terms. Democracy is not a pull. Democracy is very, very hard for them to grasp."

"I just think they know nothing," Yong Li, a staff member, said. He smiled. "Only some in city know McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken."

Helene Dunkelblau, another staff member, said, "They ask me, 'Is it true that everyone's divorced, everyone's rich, everybody has a car?' They have some very, very strange ideas."

"Chinese schools don't teach about America," Ms. Sid said. "Students learn Chinese history and the history of Communist thought. No music. No art. A little European history—maybe some would have heard of the Renaissance. Generally, they lack knowledge of other countries and other people. They take a foreign language—usually English—once or twice a week, and work on grammar. But they have very little idea of American society. You ask them, 'Who is the President of the United States?' 'Who was the first President of the United States?' 'What is the Fourth of July?' The new ones can't answer."

Besides the historical and cultural reasons that people in Chinatown guard their lives with silence, another reason is that, with crime woven into the social fabric, into the institutions that

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☐ *8-way power front seats*
☐ *Power lumbar supports*
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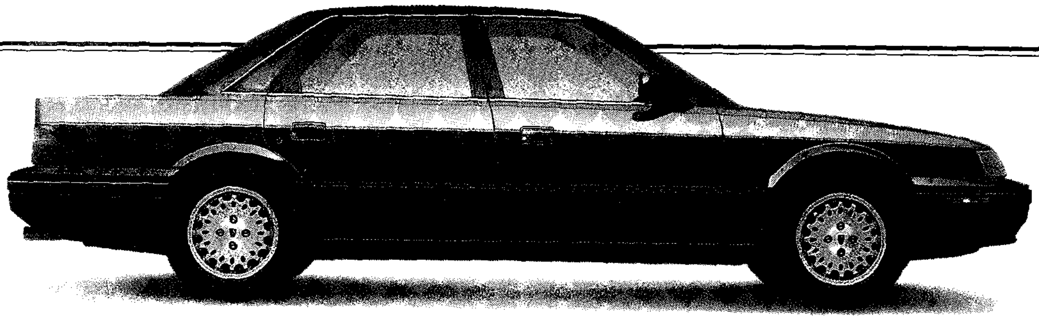
☐ *Exterior thermometer & freeze alert*
☐ *Leather-wrapped steering wheel*
☐ *Heated power mirrors with memory*
☐ *Burl walnut trim*
☐ *Remote trunk and fuel flap release*
☐ *Halogen headlamps*
☐ *V rated tires*
☐ *Power tilt glass sunroof*
☐ *8-speaker, 80 watt sound system*
☐ *Alloy wheels*
☐ *Motorized front seat belts*
☐ *Four doors*
☐ *Heated front seats*
☐ *Power windows*
☐ *Air conditioning & automatic climate control*



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keep Chinatown cohesive and isolated, they fear reprisals. Chinese gangsters are methodical about wiping out protesters.

For most of its history, Chinatown has been silent. Unwanted in America for many years, Chinese lay low, encouraged by their leaders to distrust outsiders and the authorities that mistreated them. Chinatown is now divided between the Old Guard—the conservative Cantonese who run the family associations and district associations and tongs, and their umbrella group, the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association—and a new guard, consisting of younger, second- and third-generation Chinese-Americans and some of the new immigrants from other parts of China and Asia. The Old Guard still advises residents not to wash their dirty linen outside Chinatown, and to remain more Chinese than American. The younger leaders, many of them formed by the civil-rights movement and by the Asian-American movement—a nineteen-sixties awakening of Asian pride, which was much like the Black Power movement—run most of Chinatown's social-welfare programs. They urge the community to merge with America.

BREAKING free of isolation and merging with America is not the uppermost concern in Chinatown, however. What is uppermost is work. Chinatown is given over to making money as exclusively and intensively as Wall Street. Residents work any number of hours necessary to do business, without regard to fatigue or to their stomachs. Their extraordinary schedule has led some outsiders to think that Chinese work backbreaking hours because they like to, but I met only one person who was smug about his long hours. In fact, Chinatown embarrasses a lot of its residents: ashamed of its dirty streets, running with water from overflowing vegetable and fish stands, and of its chaos, its crime, and its street gangs, they work to leave it.

Many immigrants start out as street peddlers. In three or four years, they have saved enough—between fifty and a hundred thousand dollars—to start small businesses. I didn't see how that was possible until I met Mr. Lin.

Lin works for a Korean boss, selling fruit and vegetables at a busy corner in Chinatown. He arrived, broke, from the People's Republic five years ago, hustled firecrackers and toys by himself for two years, then hired on with the Korean. His boss trucks in produce from Hunts Point, and Lin loads and unloads the truck and makes sales. The Korean needs Lin because all his customers are Chinese and he himself speaks only Korean. On Sundays and rainy days, Lin sells umbrellas on the same street corner.

In winter, Lin wears a hat with earflaps sticking out at right angles. In warmer weather, he wears a baseball cap. Lin is sixty-three years old. He's slightly bald, and is bowlegged, stout-necked, and very strong. His work clothes, always worn in several layers, are stained and dirt-encrusted. He often throws on a Federal Express jacket over his sweatshirts. Lin's face is open and lively, and he laughs a lot.

In five years, Lin has met only one white person—me. He has been out of Chinatown only a few times.

"No go outside," Lin said, puzzled, when I asked him if he had seen New York City. "Usually, I work. When I no work, I clean myself, wash clothes and rest," he went on, in slow, clear English. Curious about whether Lin was at all interested in his new home town, I asked him if there was any place in the city he wanted to visit. He thought a minute. "I hear about her, not too far from here," he said, cupping his hands above his head like a Thai dancer.

"The Statue of Liberty?"

"Sometime I go there," he affirmed. "That's one thing I do."

I offered to take Lin there, or to any other place he wished to see. Lin decided that the Statue of Liberty was too far, and picked my second suggestion—Central Park, which he had never heard of. We rode uptown in a taxi. Lin was very uneasy. "No go far, right?" he asked several times. "Not too far."

In Central Park, Lin admired the ducks at the Fifty-ninth Street pond for a minute or two, and glanced at the skyscrapers. "China cannot build so high," he said, and he seemed much relieved when, soon after arriving, we headed back downtown.

A graduate of a noted Chinese university, a civil engineer, and a well-known sprinter, Lin had been in the vanguard of Mao Zedong's first Five-Year Plan, from 1953 to 1957, helping to design a secret weapons plant in Inner Mongolia. When Russian advisers arrived, Lin worked with their general. "We talk where highway goes, where railroad goes, where buildings, how high, how far space in factory," he told me. "I am leader, because they think I am willing to join the Party." Every day when he left work, Lin was strip-searched. In the plant, China was building its first atomic bomb, with plans from Russia. "Even tops of trees have guards and watch, you know."

Mao urged that "a hundred flowers bloom" and "a hundred schools of thought contend." In 1957, Lin criticized the government, as Mao urged, and, like hundreds of thousands of intellectuals, was branded a "rightist" and a traitor to the state, and was imprisoned. In jail in Manchuria, he survived on corncobs. "No food there, all sent to Russia. Very hard life. Many dead." After prison, his punishment continued: for several years, he was forced to pull a one-ton cart. In 1964, China exploded the A-bomb.

During the Cultural Revolution, Lin's brother committed suicide. "Everyone had to become a cadre. They call him Guomindang"—Taiwan's ruling party—"beat him till his head no good." The brother threw himself off a building in Beijing. Their father, a customs officer, starved himself to death. Denounced as an anti-revolutionary, he had been forced to wear a dunce cap while being publicly criticized. He had refused to accuse his boss falsely of a "political crime," and had been jailed. He had refused a second time and had been jailed again. In prison, he had contracted pneumonia and had been denied medicine. "After, my father no eat."

In the seventies, Lin was allowed to design buildings again, but he was not restored to the status of engineer until Deng Xiaoping returned to prominence, in early 1978, and brought about the rehabilitation of many former prisoners. Lin came to Chinatown in

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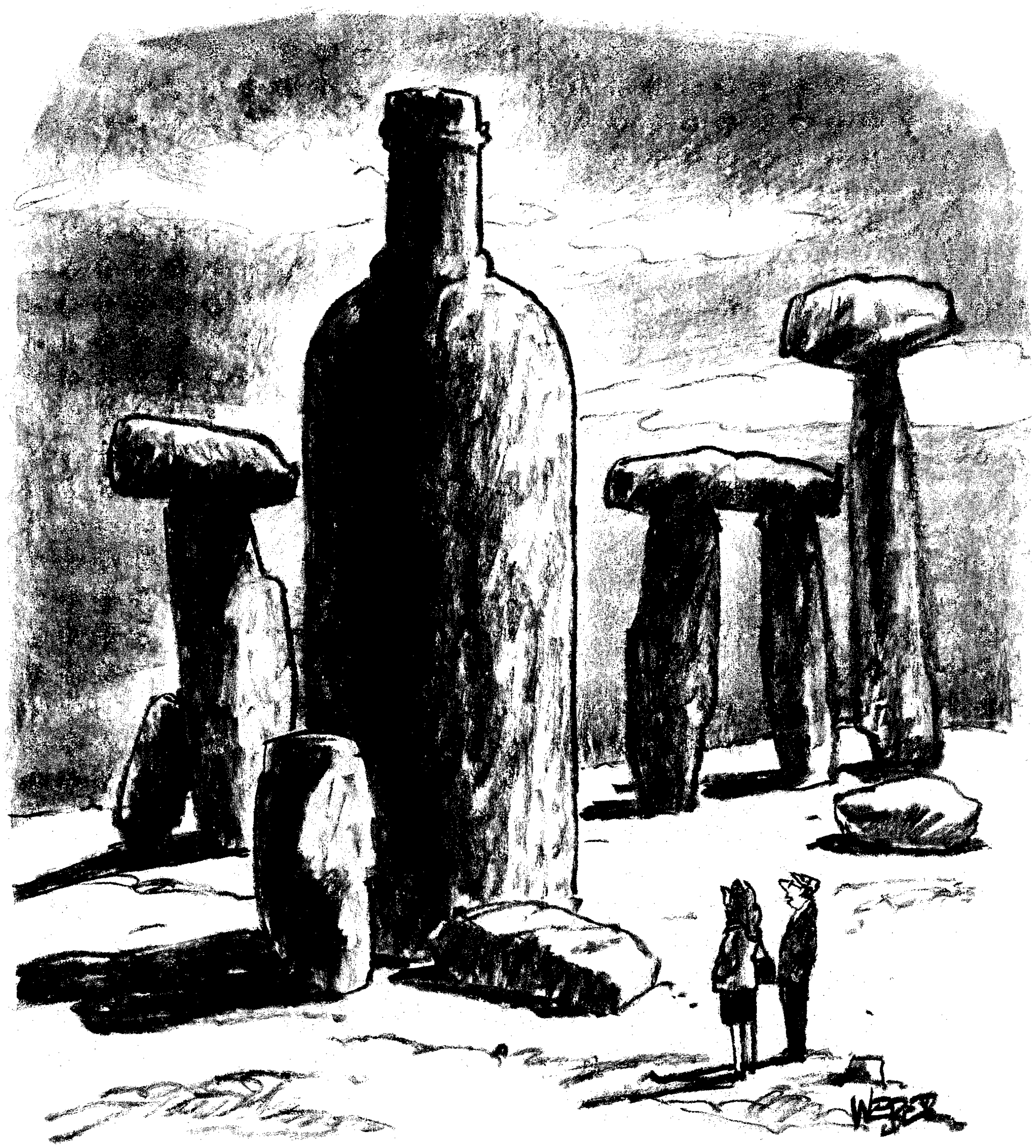

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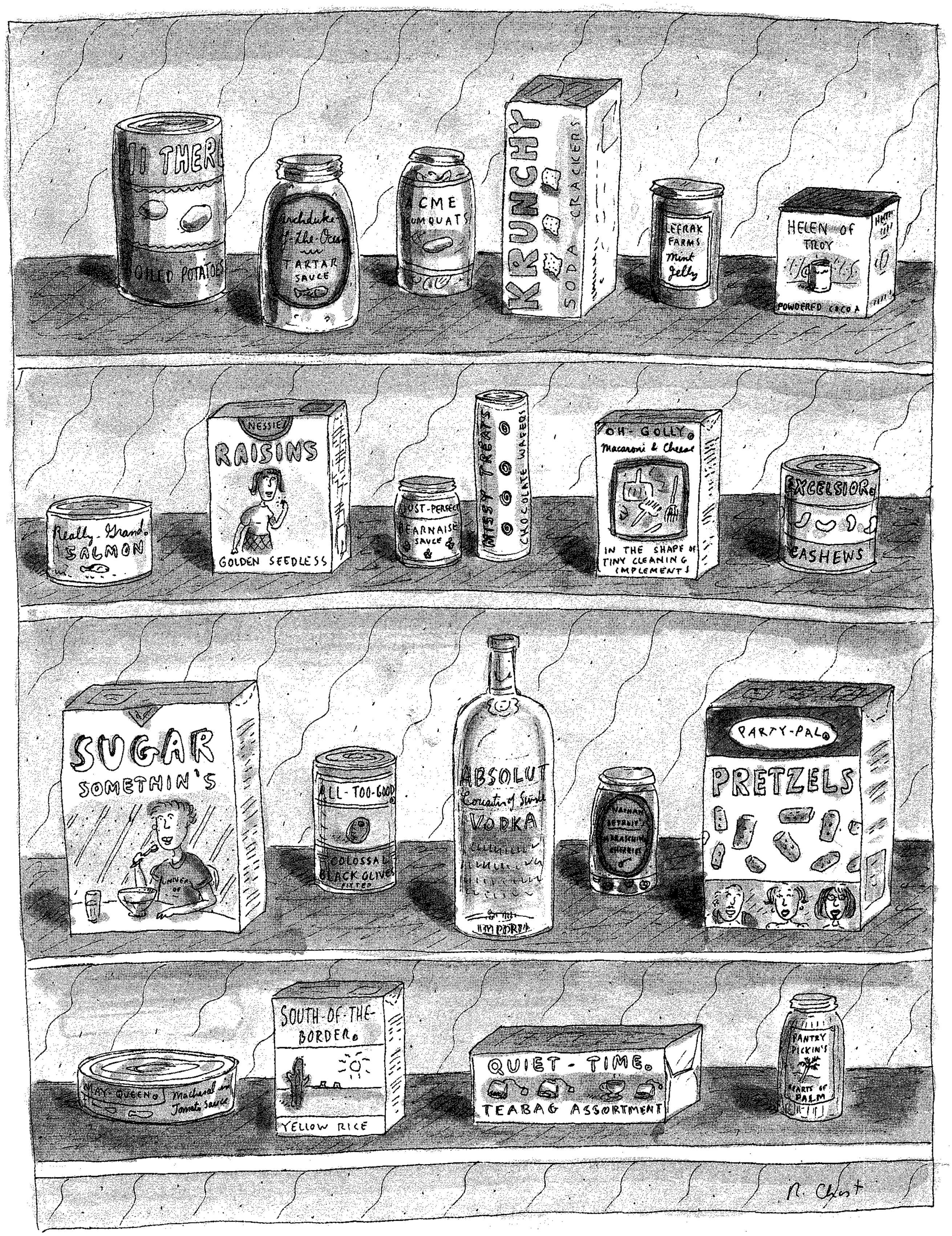
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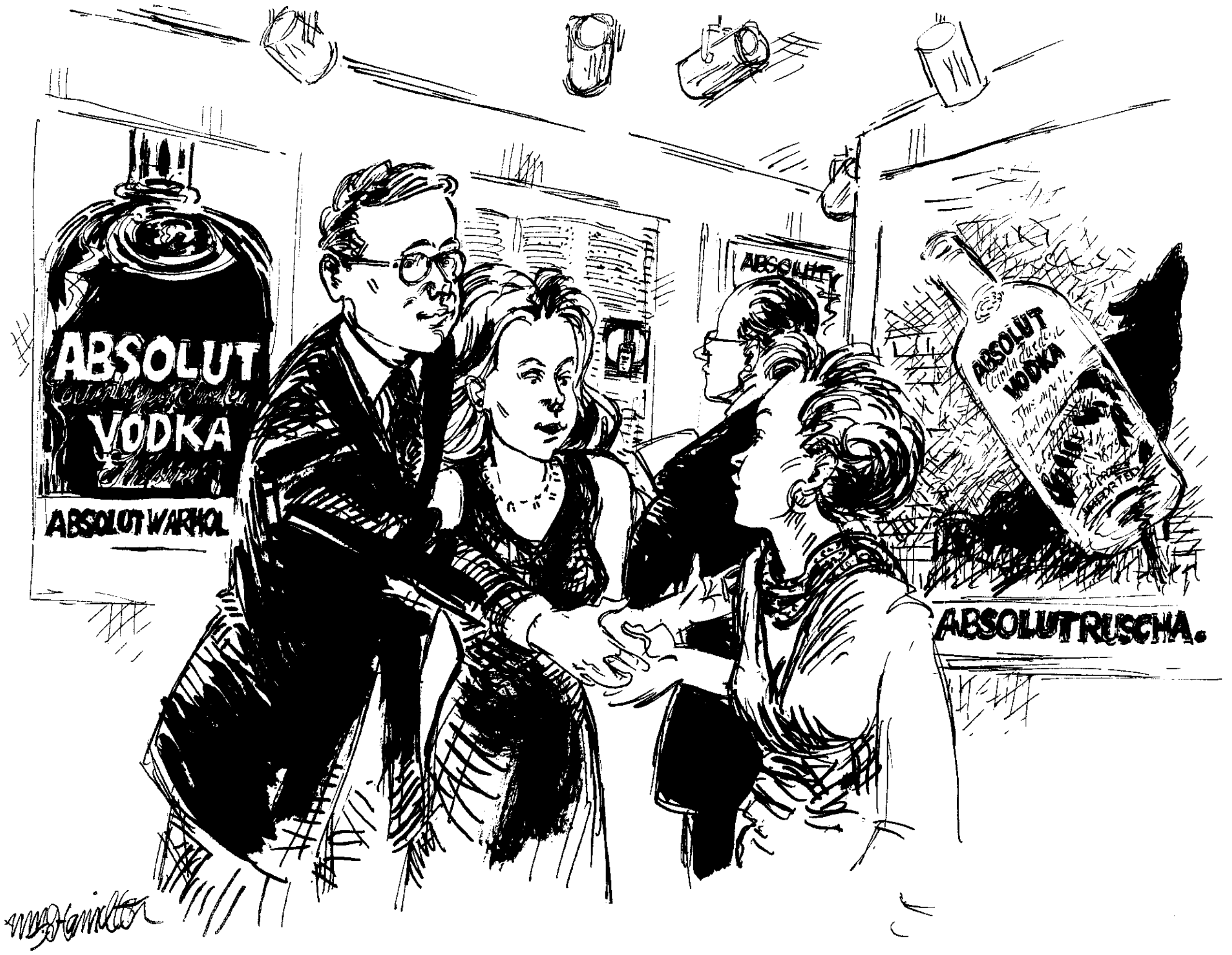
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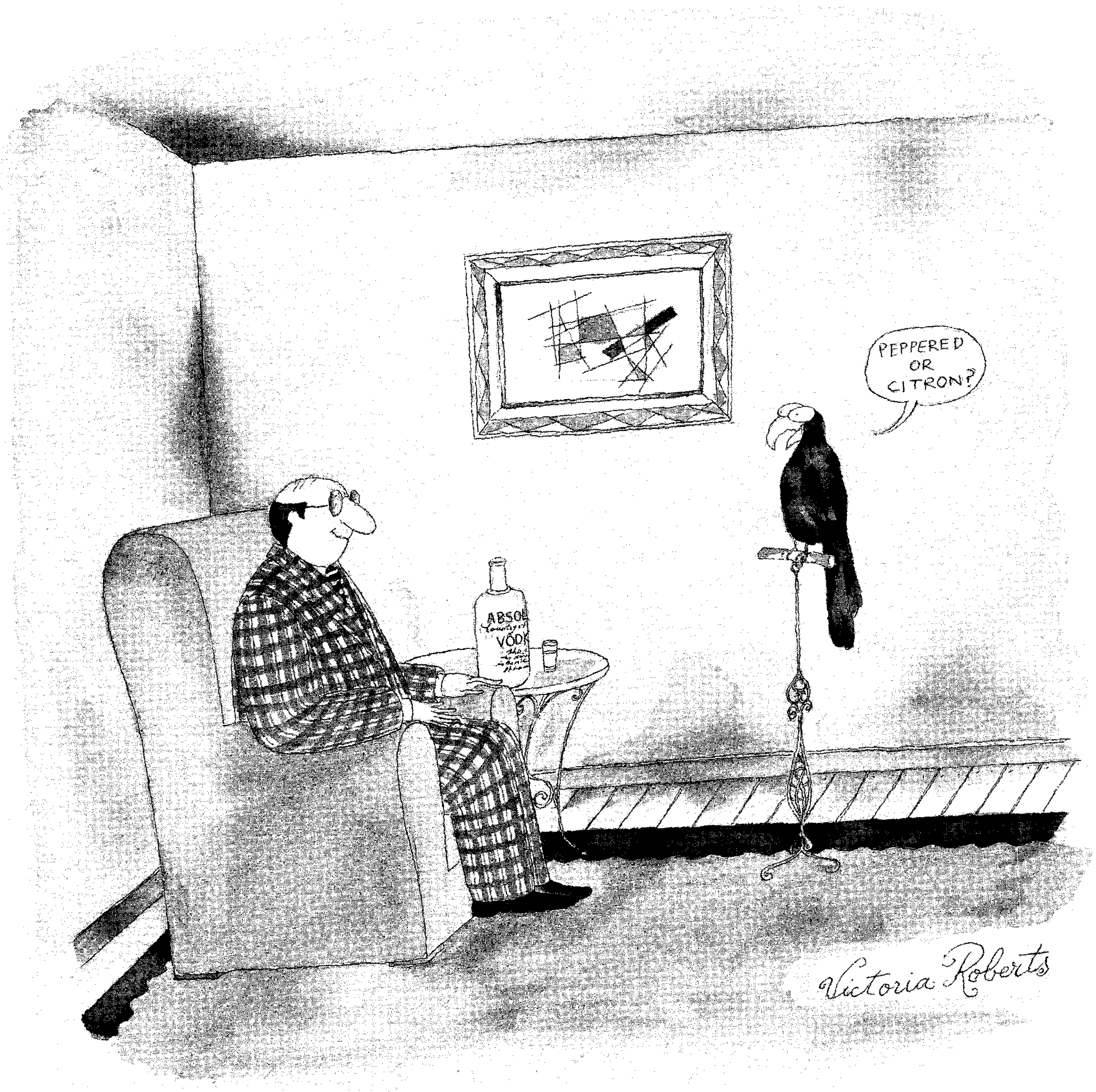
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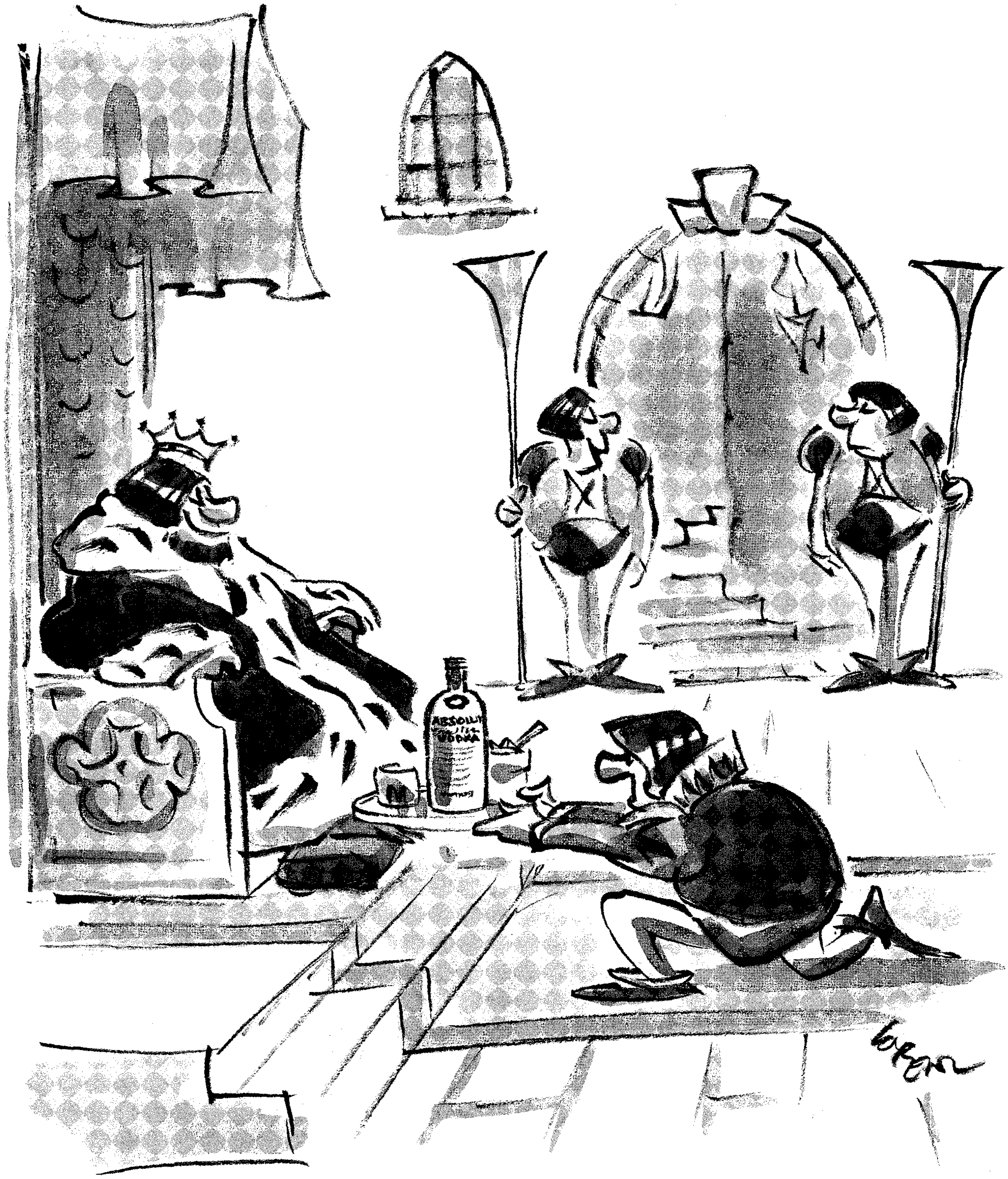
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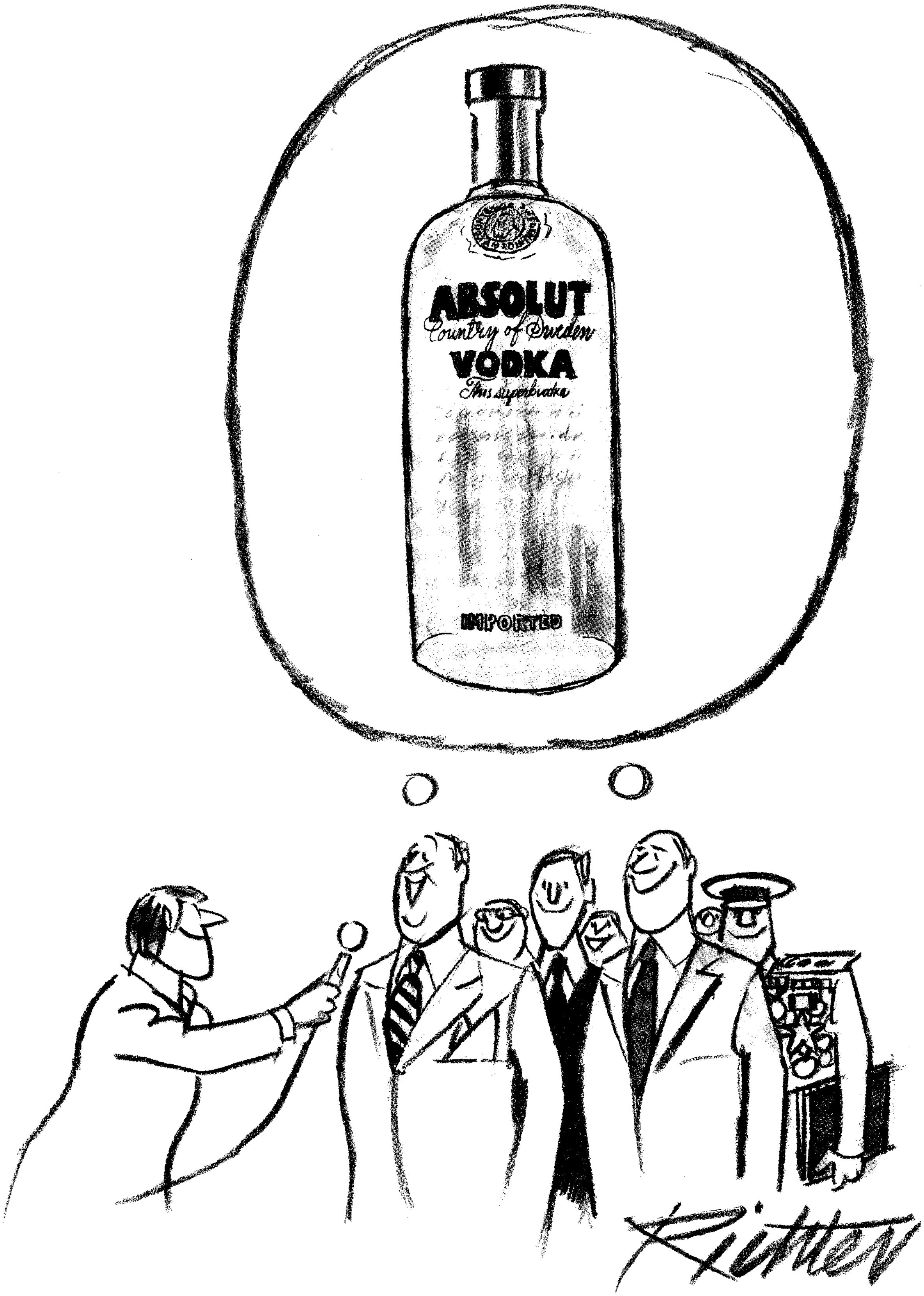
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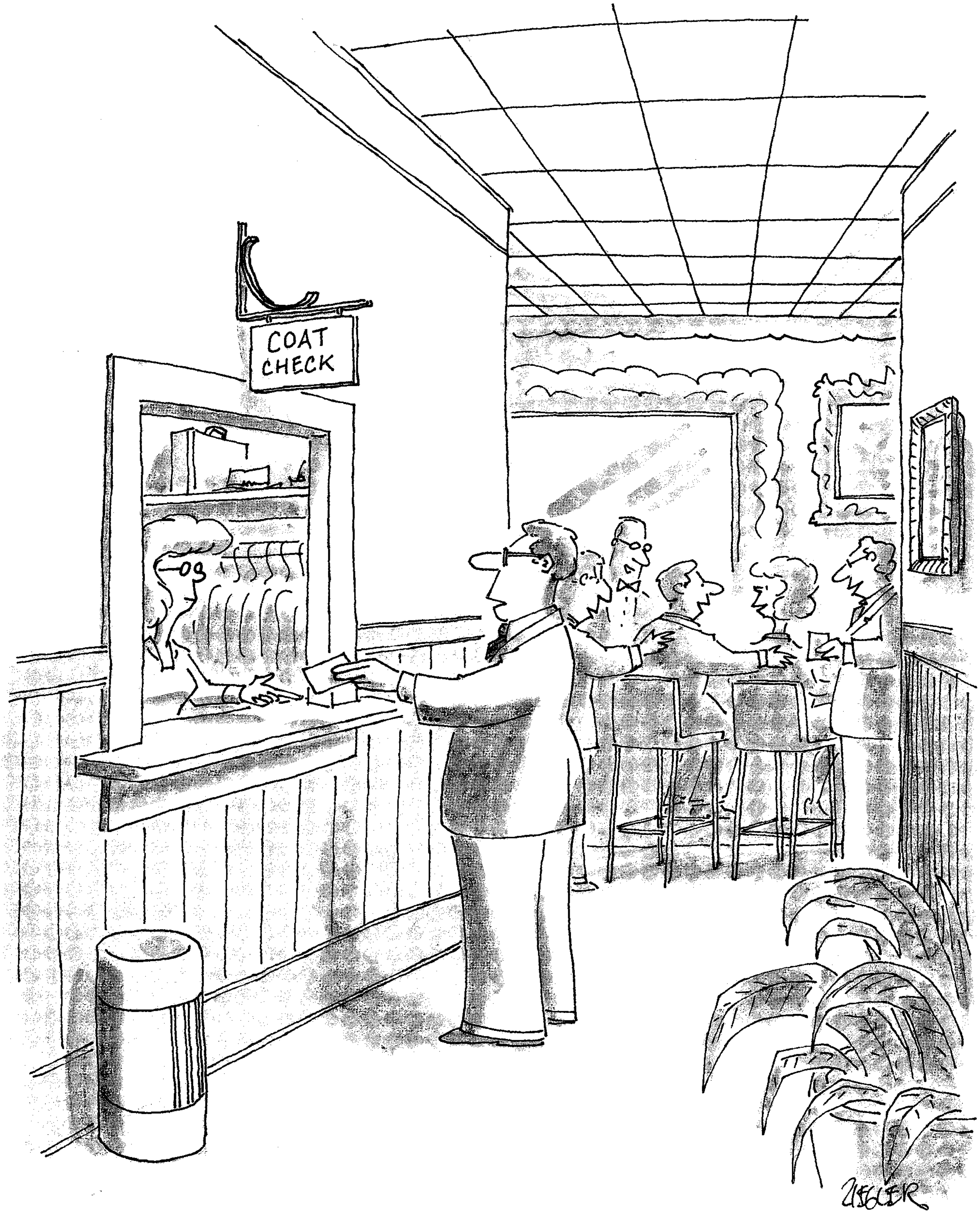
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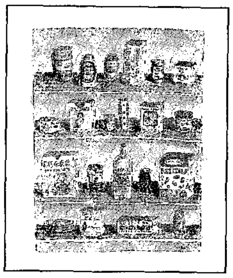

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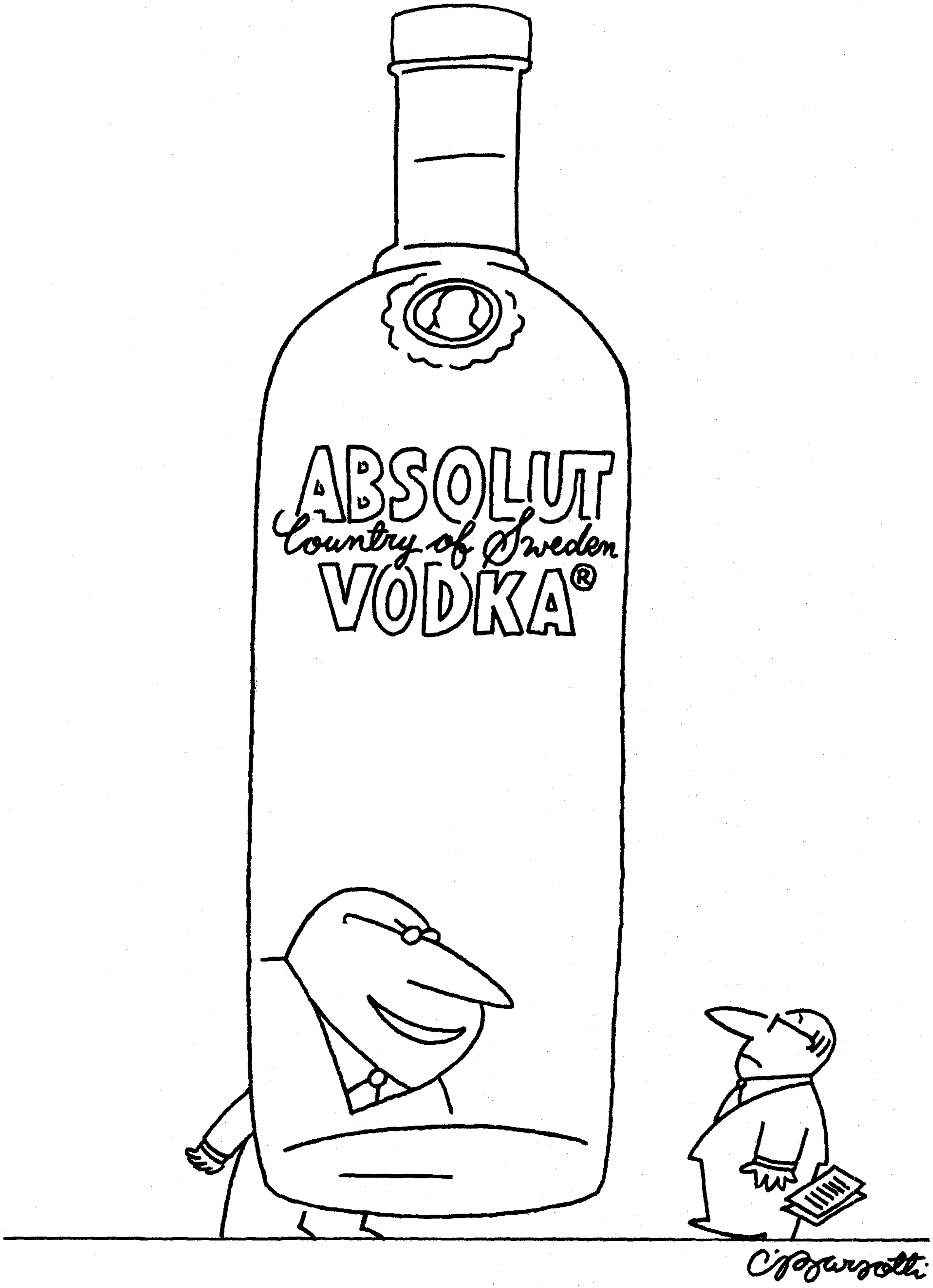
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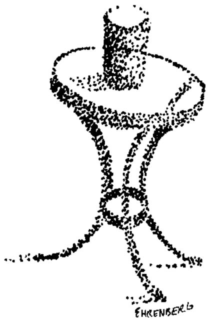
1986 on a tourist visa, proud that he had never joined the Communist Party. "Here, if a little bit of freedom, enough for me already," Lin told me. "Only a little bit of freedom. I don't care what kind of car I have or what apartment or clothes. Somebody laugh at me. 'You so old, you work so hard, you make enough money for your living.' Many laugh at me. I say, 'I work hard. I do everything. Not too long time for me.' One day I die. Under Communism pressure I work hard; now I work for freedom. I only desire to oppose Communism."

Lin lives in a *gong si fong*, a traditional "public room." This arrangement has enabled bachelors to gain a foothold in Chinatown ever since the beginning of the community. "I have only a bed. It's cheaper." One evening, Lin offered to show me the *gong si fong*. I was early for our meeting, so I walked about Chinatown. At 7 P.M., the neighborhood was still toiling. The Vietnamese were hawking fifteen-dollar made-in-Taiwan watches in open-air bazaars along Canal Street. At the corner of Canal and Mott, in old Chinatown, the Chemical Bank was bustling: couples talked to loan officers; long lines of workers deposited their pay. Chinese run quickly to the bank with any checks. They like only cash, and, besides, they worry that their factory will go out of business before they can cash their checks. A cash economy enables them to avoid paying taxes. Banks in Chinatown stay open six days a week, so they have the longest banking hours in the city.

That night, I noticed many well-to-do Chinese in furs, women wearing makeup, and middle-class couples out on dates, kissing in the streets. Such display used to be unheard of. These people were "A.B.C.s," or American-Born Chinese, and they stood out from the drab new immigrants, the "F.O.B.s," or Fresh off the Boat, and from the old-timers, particularly the bent Cantonese women in knitted hats, layers of sweaters, and men's vests.

In a few hours, buses taking gamblers to Atlantic City would line the block outside Chinatown's biggest restaurant, the Silver Palace, on the Bowery. For now, only peddlers lined the block, with mountains of batteries, plastic toys, and socks, on trolleys like the old Jewish peddlers' pushcarts. Shoppers on Canal picked their way carefully between storefront produce stands and the curbside peddlers. Bumpy green durians, sweet fruit from Indonesia, brought by the newest ethnic Chinese, were for sale among bitter melons. Fish flown in fresh daily from China—lionfish and belt fish two feet long—flopped around in boxes. Ice water dripped from the profusion of produce, and among the gagging smells rising from the sidewalk and the gutters, where the food was cleaned, was a whiff of orange peel. The singsong of Indonesian and Burmese dialects drifted by.



Herbalists in tiny stalls doled out cures. Doses of ground antler, starfish, roots, ginseng were measured and poured out onto sheets of paper. Chinatown has many new herb stores run by pharmacists from the People's Republic, who know the secrets of combining the several hundred traditional ingredients of the Chinese pharmacopoeia.

Chinese and Vietnamese jewelry stores along Canal Street were jammed. Many young black couples were trying on medallions and gold chains and chunky, gold-plated "door knocker" earrings. Chinatown is a jewelry district for the working class. For wholesale, the trade goes uptown.

No. 11 Pell Street is a gang hangout—a tea shop where the Flying Dragons, one of four major gangs in Chinatown, congregate. It was full of teen-agers with punk haircuts. The kids looked like hoodlums from the fifties: tight black jeans, bare ankles, black leather jackets. Across the street, at No. 16, was their sponsor, the Hip Sing tong. The rule of the streets is not to hit *low faan*, because tourism is necessary, but the rule is often broken. I hurried by No. 15, where a club called Eng Suey Dong was marked by a red sign in English above a basement stoop. It is a mah-jongg parlor, and, according to the police, is one of Chinatown's many illegal basement gambling houses. Generally run by the tongs, the gambling houses are protected by steel doors, peepholes, video monitors, and gang members with submachine guns.

Rain was thinning the crowds on Mott Street. The oldest store in Chinatown, Quong Yuen Shing & Company, at No. 32, looked dead. In the window were a few stacks of rice bowls, some figurines, a birdcage. A single light was on in the back, picking out beautiful wooden scrollwork, made in China a hundred years ago.

In front of Confucius Plaza, a publicly funded housing project on Division Street, stands a ten-foot bronze statue of the sage. This was a present from the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, which functions as Chinatown's unofficial governing body, and it caused a controversy when it was proposed, in 1976. The leftists, who support the People's Republic, didn't want it, because all forms of feudalism were being wiped out in China. The rightists, who champion Taiwan, thought Confucius the best symbol of Chinese cultural heritage, and the statue went up. In a community bought lock, stock, and barrel by the Nationalists, and forever fighting the 1945-49 civil war, it remains a symbol of division.

Down East Broadway, the lights of garment factories in six-story tenements were still shining. They turn off at 9 P.M., the end of a twelve-hour day. Farther up East Broadway is the Wild West of Chinatown—the newest settlements, hotly disputed by the gangs.

Before I met Lin, I peeked into Triple Eight Palace, one of a number of new, Hong Kong-style restaurants, in a mall under the Manhattan Bridge. Hong Kong cooking is Cantonese, and the Cantonese are epicures. Sea bass were swimming in saltwater tanks set into the walls above diners' heads. Neon sculptures blinked distractingly in the gigantic dining room. Among the crowd were a lot of elderly Chinese men in baseball caps and windbreakers.

Almost nothing is left of Little Italy—just one or two blocks of Grand and Mulberry Streets. Chinese with suitcases of cash have been buying out Italians. Many buildings in Chinatown have been sold for more than a million dollars. Since the early eighties, when China began threatening to reclaim Hong Kong, flight capital from the world's third-largest financial center has gilded Chinatowns worldwide. As 1997, when Hong Kong reverts to China, nears, the outflow has become a torrent. British Columbia is receiving four billion dollars of investment a year from Hong Kong. San Fran-

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cisco, Sydney, Toronto, and other cities that Hong Kongese consider classy have had similar infusions of money. Chinatown has received comparatively little—maybe a billion dollars. The money has brought the first condos; fancier restaurants, with midtown prices and sea bass swimming in the walls; and higher rents. Hong Kongese do not want to live in Chinatown; they buy a condo here as an investment. Until the Beijing massacre, People's Republic government officials bought condos, too, and planned a hotel. The money from the "other side" has not changed most of Chinatown. It is still a slum, with some of the oldest housing in the city, a third of it built before 1900.

In the dim light of one bare bulb hanging from a rusted tin ceiling, the old Mee Heung Chow Main Corporation, on Mott Street, was quiet. The day's production of noodles lay boxed and stacked on the wooden floor. Off to the right, in a small office, a slight man in a white shirt and black pants—the colors of servitude in Chinatown—tallied the books. As I stared into that old-fashioned shop, unchanged since the nineteen-thirties—at storage racks in back, at a colorful poster of a Chinese opera character—a giant rat ran across the floor to the storage racks. It paused there, sneaked ahead carefully until only its tail, slender and quivering, was visible, and then, in a flash, slid between the boxes.

Lin and I met on a street near the East River. He was eager to show me the *gong si fong*, but, he said, we must hurry. The other bachelors in the apartment were waiters, and were out working now. Lin was worried that one might return unexpectedly and find him with a *low faan* in the apartment. I agreed not to mention the location of the *gong si fong*, because it is in a city-subsidized housing project, and is illegal.

The place, originally a one-bedroom apartment, was dark and close-smelling. A twenty-foot-long corridor that ended in a grimy window ran along one side of it. The left wall of the corridor, made of rough, unpainted plywood, enclosed what used to be the living room. It had been subdivided by plywood partitions into three bedrooms, for six people. The bedrooms had sliding plywood doors, each secured with a tiny padlock, like cabins on a ship. The landlady had come from China in 1981, gone into business, and made good. She had put up the partitions and then moved on, and she now charged her sublessees a total of eight hundred and fifty dollars a month for a three-hundred-and-seventeen-dollar apartment.

Lin showed me his bedroom, the compartment nearest the windows. It was seven feet by six—smaller than many closets in New York City apartments. A bunk bed took up most of the space. The top bunk had a straw mat over bright sheets. The bottom bunk was Lin's. The distance from the bed to the windows was two steps. Two people could not pass in the space. Under the windows, on shelves, were some coffee mugs, a small TV, a telephone, and a few personal effects, such as a plastic bag containing Lin's private papers. A partly filled-out census form and a Chinese entertainment magazine were stuffed in the bag. A bare light bulb hung from a hook on the wall. About three feet of space between the ceiling and the upper bunk served as a closet; pants and shirts hung on nails in the partition.

The kitchen, about five feet by eight, had the same air of desolation. The faucet was broken and ran incessantly. There was a small four-burner gas stove, used mostly by Lin and his bunkmate, a clothes presser in a garment shop, who was about his age. The icebox worked. The one window was streaked with something that looked like soy sauce. No one had cleaned in here any time recently. I asked Lin what was in the cupboards. He opened one, and ten roaches ran past a few bottles of cooking oil.

In the bathroom, the toilet had no seat. The base was brown with crud. In back of the bathroom was the original bedroom, where four more people, one of them a smuggler importing Chinese from Fujian Province, lived.

The *gong si fong* could accommodate ten people, but some of Lin's roommates had moved away recently, leaving seven. The man living alone in the cubicle next to Lin's paid two hundred dollars a month rent; Lin and his bunkmate paid a hundred and twenty-five dollars apiece; and the four occupants of the rear bedroom paid a hundred dollars each.

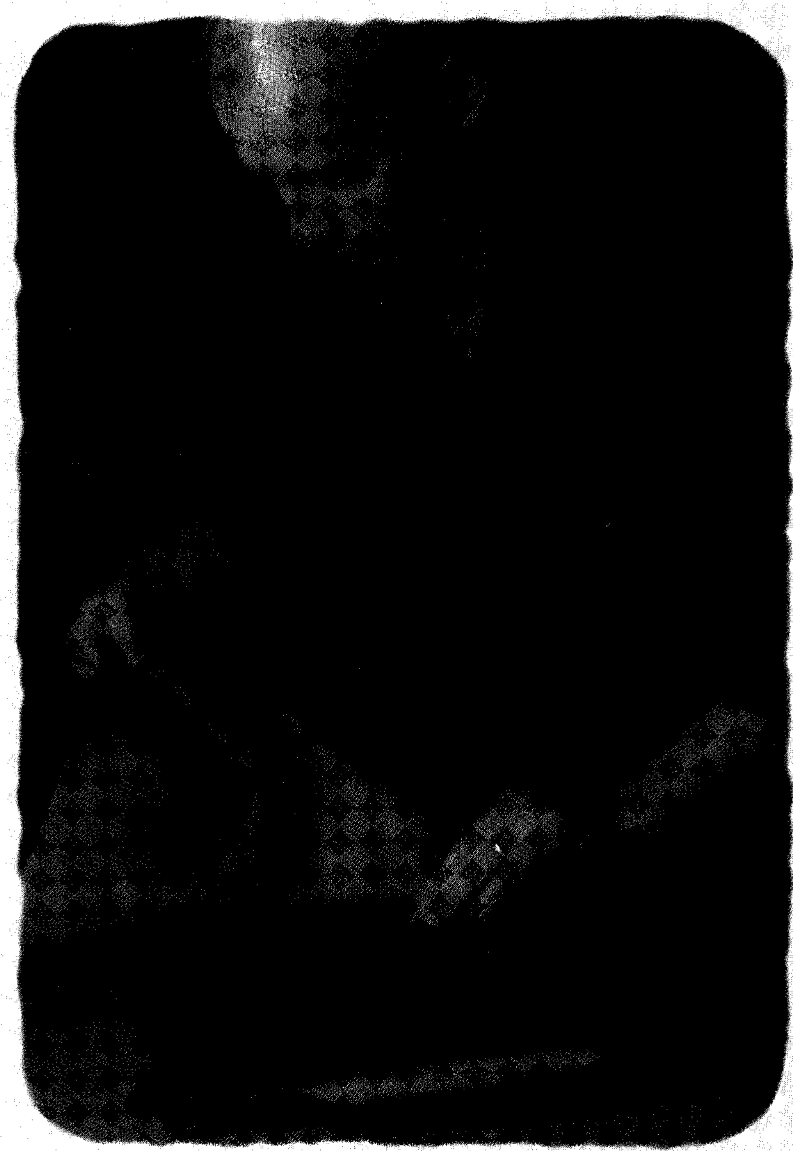
Lin forgoes any privacy or comfort not because he is poor but to save money. He earns three hundred and sixty dollars a week peddling vegetables and fruit. Selling umbrellas is more lucrative, bringing in from eighty to a hundred dollars a day. His monthly income, Lin says with utter frankness, and with a relish common to most Chinese when they discuss money, averages eighteen hundred dollars. He has saved some eighteen thousand dollars of his annual twenty-two-thousand-dollar income in each of the last five years. He pays no taxes and, like a lot of illegal immigrants, keeps his money hidden from the Internal Revenue Service. All told, Lin has a hundred and twenty thousand dollars tucked away for a small business.

I asked Lin how it was possible for him to save eighty per cent of his income.

He explained that he spends only two hundred and fifty dollars a month—the money for his rent, a few dollars on the telephone, and about a hundred dollars on food. "Rice very cheap," he said, smiling. "And boss give me lunch."

Tens of thousands of Chinese live Spartan, insular lives like Lin's, never mixing with outside society, renting beds in basements or in *gong si fong*, sharing a one-bedroom apartment with ten or fifteen people, or doubling up with other families in tiny apartments in lower Manhattan. Almost no one in Chinatown lives alone. Some sub-sublet their bunks to others, and sleep in shifts. They work, work, work. Working six days a week, from sixty to eighty hours, is typical. In Chinatown there is no T.G.I.F. Everyone wants, like Lin, to save a pile of money. The expressions I heard most often in Chinatown as I talked to residents were "big money," "U.S. dollar," "easy money," and dozens of other variations on the theme of money.

MOST people in Chinatown have endured so many hardships abroad that they are willing to accept many more to build up economic freedom for the first time in their lives. Some have swum the river from Canton to Hong Kong to escape from the People's Republic, or climbed over the mountains at night to reach the colony. Others have paid smugglers from thirty thousand to fifty thousand dollars to



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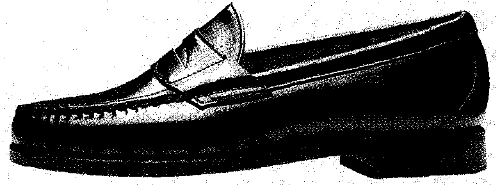

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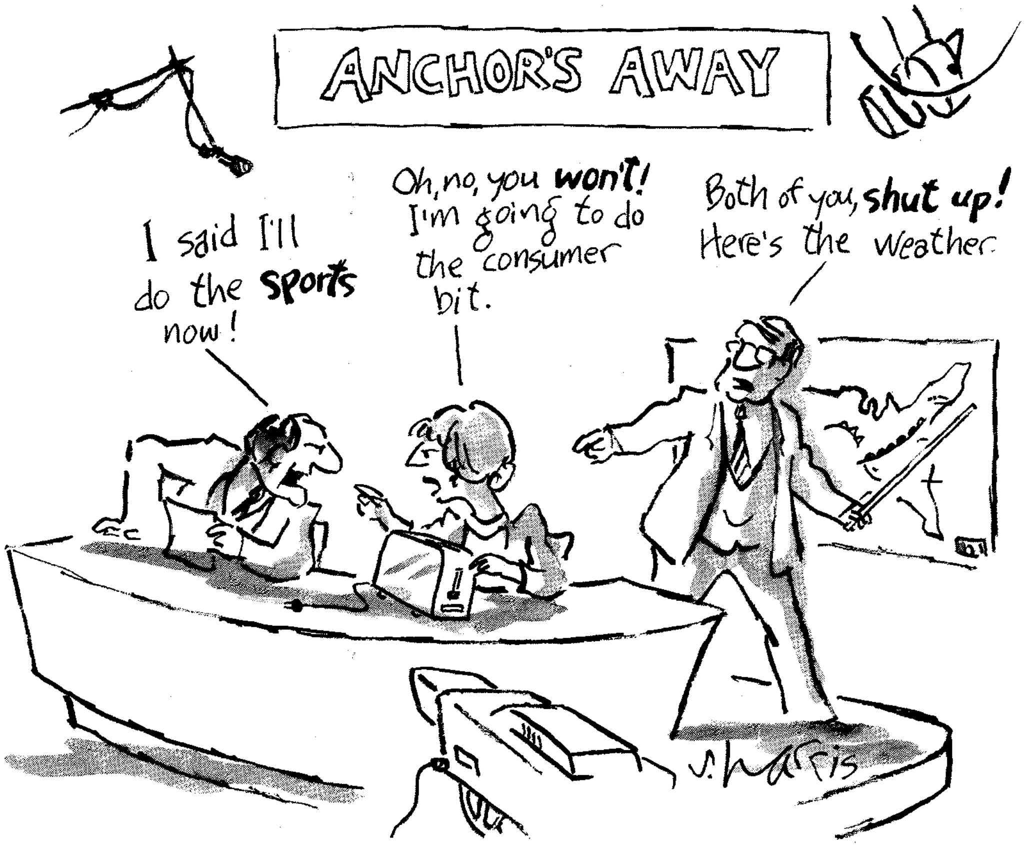
ANCHOR'S AWAY
I said I'll do the sports now!
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Both of you, shut up! Here's the weather.
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slip them into the United States, and live here virtually as indentured slaves until they repay their passage. Some are Chinese boat people from Vietnam, or Chinese-Vietnamese from the Orderly Departure Program—the product of a 1979 agreement between Vietnam and the United States which admits, in addition to refugees, twenty thousand Vietnamese a year who have family members here. Others wangle visas in order to have more than one child, the limit, by law, in China. Mail-order brides are common, as are arranged marriages. Couples work two jobs and are seldom home. A good many have no time to bring up their children, and no money for babysitters, so they send their babies to relatives in Hong Kong or Taiwan to be brought up.

Considering how little most Chinese earn, it is amazing that they can save at all for what they call the "eight bigs"—a color television, a refrigerator, a car, a VCR, a camera, a set of furniture, a telephone, and a washing machine—to say nothing of saving enough to start a small business. Chinatown exploits its workers. Most live in peonage, working long hours for less than ten thousand dollars a year. Average salaries run about nine thousand five hundred dollars for a union garment-shop worker or a dishwasher, nearly twenty thousand for a waiter. Nonetheless, Chinese save. Lin's eighty-per-cent savings rate was the highest I encountered, but I met many people whose ability to save was equally extraordinary. Leslie Lim, a native of Singapore, was one. He reminds me of the actor Joel Grey—he has the same nimble walk, and a grin that takes up most of his small, pale face. A waiter in a Vietnamese-Chinese restaurant, he is twenty-five years old. He picks up languages easily, and, like many people from Singapore, is bilingual in Chinese and English. He dreams of saving twenty thousand dollars, so he can go home and open a timber company. The son of rubber tappers, he grew up in a mountain village—"so pretty, so clean, no garbage," he told me when I talked to him in Chinatown one evening. "The house is poor. No TV, no sofa, only chopsticks, two chairs, glass windows." His parents scraped to send him to Singapore's Chinese Methodist High School. "I try to work in salesmen, like Amway, but I lose money. Nobody would buy from me. I'm shy. I scared to try to talk to somebody," Lim said, a huge grin spreading across his face. "Here, I have to brave and try to talk every things. I like America. I'm glad I come. U.S. dollar—what I like about this country." Lim laughed. "I have worked twelve hours a day without stop. Yeah, I look happy, but I have to worry for my house. Everything for the U.S. dollar."

Before Lim borrowed the air fare to New York, he bought his parents a house in Singapore: in Chinese culture, it is his duty as the No. 1 son to provide for his parents after they retire. The house has a fifteen-thousand-dollar mortgage, and from his monthly earnings of fifteen hundred dollars Lim sends home three hundred and fifty dollars for the mortgage and for his brother's school fees, another of his responsibilities as firstborn. For himself, he rents a bed in a *gong si fong* for two hundred dollars a month. Lim devotes every waking hour to making money and saving it. The only thing he spends money on is newspapers.

"No movies, no drinking, no gambling," he told me. "It's too expensive for a movie—five dollars. In Singapore, only one dollar, and it's first class. But here, five dollars—that's about ten dollars Singapore money. Oh, my God! I don't know where is sports. I like baseball. Gambling is too expensive. Not interesting to me. Many my friends on their day off go to Atlantic City, but nobody say they win. They lose. They all lose. They crazy. I went once. Wow—too boring. I don't know how to play. And to sit down alone? I don't like alone. No way buy a house here! I have to go back and see my mom and stay together with my mom. Because we are a family. I love my parents very much."

Though Lim is halfway to his goal, having saved ten thousand dollars in the eight months he has been in America, he is a little restless. "Chinatown is so cheap," he said. "You can't make much money here. Chinatown restaurants only pay three hundred dollars a month to waiters—the rest is tips. For a waiter, seventeen hundred dollars a month should be minimum. They don't earn it, they go away. Head chef earns two thousand a month. Other cooks, one thousand and three hundred to fifteen hundred dollars." Lim was quiet a minute. "Maybe uptown is better. I don't like working here. You must work harder than uptown, longer hours, low pay. At least eighteen hundred dollars a month I want to make. Just to save it. When I get a day off, I deliver menus. Fifty dollars a day."

Dreaming of his timber company, working from 11 A.M. to 11 P.M., Lim is "so lonely," he told me. "Here, right, is so boring. I never think how to make myself less lonely, just how to make more money. I don't think it's a mistake. When I get the money, I go home. That's all."

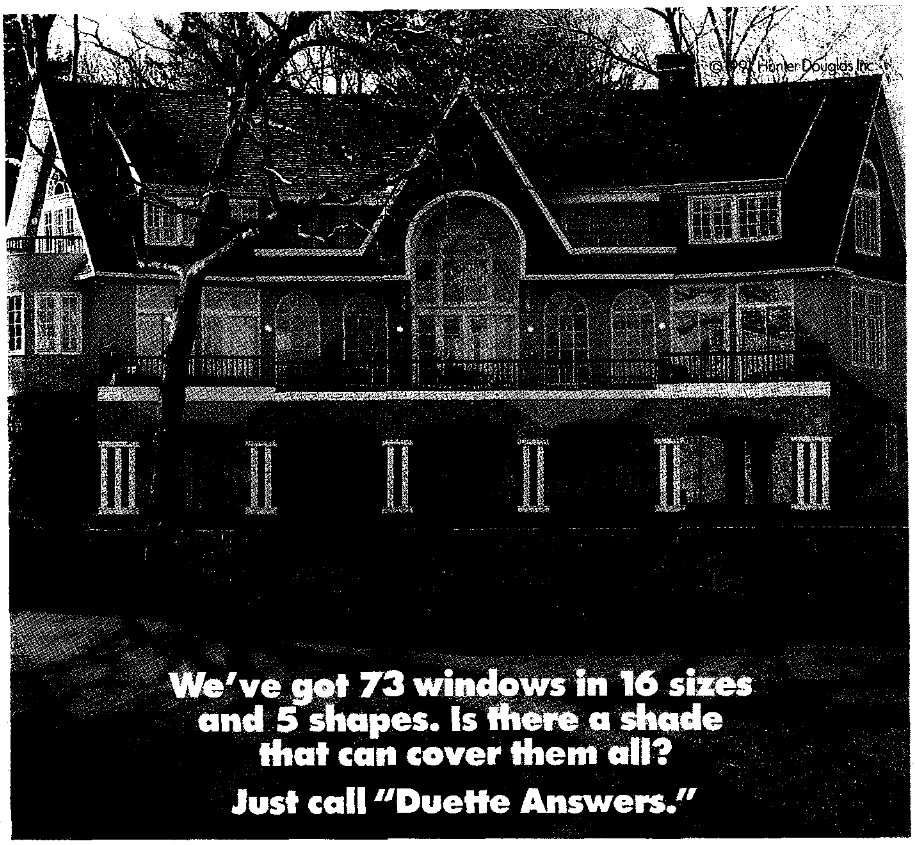
Lim plans to marry eventually. "First, I make the money here. My own opinion, first the money. If I don't have the money, I don't have everything that's necessary. If you don't have the money, nobody is close to you. I tried this dating in Singapore. Just alone in the house, nobody close to me." Lim closed his eyes, anguished.

"Why not use your day off to see friends, make life here more agreeable for yourself, enjoy the pastimes you liked in Singapore—stamp collecting, for instance, football, baseball, dancing?" I suggested.

"I don't want to waste time anymore," Lim said, and he added that Chinatown people have no time for friendships. The only outsiders he knows are a policeman and me. "I made the right decision to come here. Only want to go back to Singapore. Nobody talk to me when I get a day off. Everybody go to work. When you talk together, time flies."

On the street, as we parted, Lim said, "I'm happy tonight." He grinned shyly, ear to ear. "Nobody talk to me for such a long time."

There are many people like Leslie Lim in Chinatown, enduring lonely, threadbare lives in crowded, unsanitary apartments, dreaming of a small business, and earning money to the exclusion of all else—learning about America included. I grew used to hearing about immigrants with more savings than many middle-class Caucasians I knew. Chinatown has twenty-seven banks—an enormous number for a community of a hundred and fifty thousand. Their combined deposits, according to the latest figures, come to three billion five hundred million dollars. Probably half is flight capital. The rest is testimony to the fabled Chinese thrift. Actually, the community has accumulated far more capital than these figures show. Lots of Chinese bank with their family associations or keep their money in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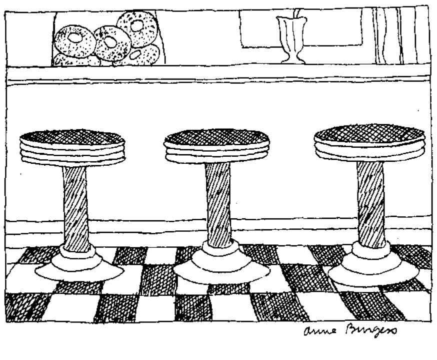
safe-deposit boxes rather than in bank accounts. The National Westminster Bank, for instance, has more safe-deposit boxes rented in its Chinatown branch than in any other in the city, except the branch in the jewelry district. Bankers in the community say that two-income couples save between thirty and forty per cent of their pay. “Give them three to four years,” Dean Lui, a local real-estate broker, says. “They'll buy a two-family house in Flushing, the second Chinatown. They put down cash, thirty to forty per cent of the mortgage. Even fifty per cent. Chinese don't like debt; they don't like paying interest. They'll rent out one half of the house and use the other, or rent out both halves. The average turnover of a new house is five to seven years. Chinese will sell it in two or three years and buy a one-family house. In ten or fifteen years, they'll move to the suburbs—Long Island or Connecticut.”

Flushing has thirty-one banks, with two billion eight hundred million dollars in deposits. The area was settled in the early nineteen-seventies by the first wave of immigrants after the change in the immigration laws, and is now Taiwanese turf, and almost exclusively Mandarin-speaking. Encouraged by Taiwan's churning economy and the second-largest foreign-exchange reserves in the world, more Taiwanese have invested in Flushing recently, often buying second homes and rental properties as hedges in case China reclaims its capitalist enemy. Albert Liu, the president of Asia Bank, in Flushing, told me, “There are about sixty-five thousand Chinese in Flushing, increasing at about two thousand to three thousand a year. We opened bank seven years ago. Seven years ago on this block, no Chinese stores.” Liu smiled like the Cheshire cat. “We chose this block, and many Orientals moved to it, and it is now all Chinese. Look at the signs—no English!” He laughed heartily.

IN Chinatown, starting a small business is phenomenally expensive. To set foot in a new shop, a shopkeeper has to pay “key money” to the landlord—a hundred thousand dollars for a ten-year lease on a commercial site on Mott Street, or fifty thousand for a five-year lease, for example. Rents, pushed up by Hong Kong investment, run about seventy-five hundred dollars a month for a twelve-hundred-square-foot store on Canal Street—higher than some rents in the World Trade Center. To recoup, many shopkeepers illegally sublet the three to five feet of sidewalk in front of their stores to peddlers and entrepreneurs, for as much as two thousand dollars a month.

Mrs. Kong Kee is one of Chinatown's lucky ones. She recently moved away from Chinatown, to Westchester County, and commutes daily to her business, one of the largest soybean retail outlets in the community. She arrived from Hong Kong in 1972, after escaping from the People's Republic, and, at first, she peddled vegetables on the street. She earned enough to feed three babies, and to open a soybean shop, which had been her business back in Canton. Now she and her husband own four shops, including one in Flushing. They have eighteen employees, five of them family. Business is good. Mrs. Kee's main shop is on Mulberry Street, but her busiest is on Canal Street, next to an East Side I.R.T. entrance. The shop spills out onto the sidewalk with vats of chrysanthemum tea; vats of hot, sweet soybean curd, a custardy dessert; plastic bottles of jelly grass and soy milk; and chow fun and ho fun—big, slippery white-rice noodles, heavy and sleek.

Mrs. Kee's daughter Tina, a jovial young woman, pregnant with her first child, speaks some English. She told me, “This family business. My mother run around Chinatown, she always run around. So I'm helper here, twelve hours a day before I'm pregnant. My mother works 7 A.M. to 9 P.M. almost sixteen years. No day off in almost sixteen years. Only New Year's, only. Cousins never have a day off—they don't want it, because they're new immigrants, and also the finances not that well, maybe they need to save money for their own house or a store. My grandmothers work seven days a week—almost ten hours a day. They make bean curd and cook lunch for workers. Anything—they can handle it. Ages seventy-six and sixty-two. They like it. They strong, they never sick. No sit.” Tina shook her hands vigorously in denial. “Only stand up, ten hours a day.”



Tina's older grandmother, who is four feet tall, densely wrinkled, with short gray hair held back in bobby pins, sorts tofu in the “factory,” a large white room at the back of the railroad-car-shaped store on Mulberry Street. Tina's other grandmother, wearing a black pants suit, bags the brown, rubbery fried curds in plastic. Tina's two cousins, who are also pregnant, cook the tofu on an industrial stove. Two young boys in boots shovel soybeans into machines that crush them in water. Tina explained that they boil the mixture and then separate the solid portion from the soy milk. To the milk they add white plaster, to help separate the curds from the whey. The whey drains off, and they let the curds solidify in molds cooled in tubs of water.

Speaking Cantonese, Mrs. Kee told Connie and me that she doesn't know English, and that it's a big disadvantage. She wants her children to know English, so they can get into the mainstream.

Tina interrupted to say, “My parents almost no education. Only one or two years in China, and only Chinese, no English. Is a problem.”

“How can I learn English!” Mrs. Kee exclaimed. “No time! I raised three children.” She laughed hard.

“My parents think in whole family no one has a very good education, including me,” Tina said sorrowfully. “I went six months to high school and drop out. Being an immigrant, I didn't learn that much. I couldn't catch up that much. So make me a headache. Five years ago, they had limited bilingual program.” She added, “We make good profit. We are not rich.”

Mrs. Kee nodded. “No rich.” She paused, then said, “I have great expectations for my children. For me, it's very difficult to merge into American society, and I expect my children will have a better time.”

Mrs. Kee moved to Westchester so that her son could have a better education. She has memorized the drive into the city, because she cannot read

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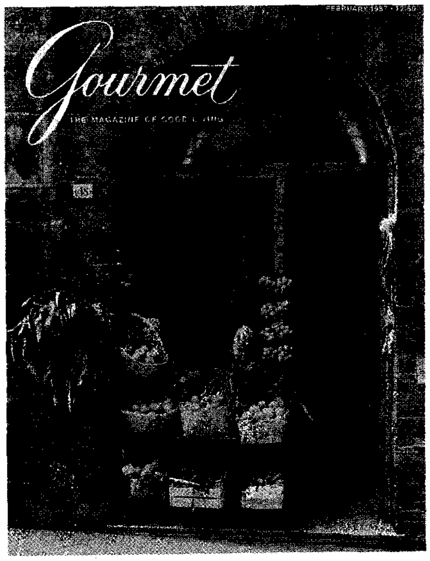


highway signs. She has no Caucasian friends in Westchester, and doesn't participate in the weekend life there, for she works seven days a week.

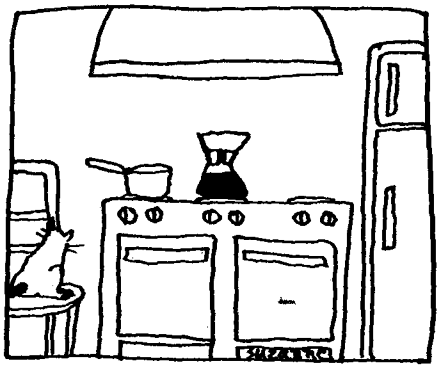
Her daughter Tina is also too busy saving for her future to assimilate. "My husband and I cannot save that much money," Tina told me. "Of course, some, but not boss, like my mother. I feel my salary is a little low—sixteen hundred dollars a month take home. This is family business—no benefits, no vacation, no insurance. This is usual in Chinatown. Almost no business give benefits. We had two workers take a vacation. Were here two years, we gave them one week. But they eat here three times a day—lunch, dinner, tea. Anything to drink also. My husband is a driver for a limo service. Not very hard work—better money than restaurant work. Fourteen hours a day, but he is his own boss. Only at night we see each other. We live in my mother's old apartment on Mulberry Street. Five hundred dollars for one bedroom, with tub in kitchen, toilet in hall." Tina laughed, describing the typical tenement built before the 1901 building code requiring toilets in each apartment, and passed down through generations of German, Irish, Italian, and now Chinese immigrants. "No lease," Tina added. "Illegal tenant."

Many immigrants are caught in a vicious circle: working sixty or eighty hours a week to save money to get out of Chinatown, buy homes, fulfill Confucian duties to their parents, and open small businesses—the traditional way newcomers without means establish themselves—they have no time to learn English. They become prisoners of Chinatown. They are paid so little that it takes them decades to save enough to escape. When they do escape, they can't assimilate, because they can't speak English.

GARMENT factories, the economic backbone of Chinatown, perpetuate the vicious circle. Four hundred and seventy-five union shops provide the community's only health insurance and benefits such as maternity leave and paid vacations. "New immigrants choose the work just for the health benefits," I was told by May Chen, the assistant education director for Local 23-25 of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, which covers Chinatown. "One of the shocks for newcomers is that we have no national health system. The People's Republic, Taiwan, Hong Kong all have national health insurance." Garment workers' pay fluctuates with the market, and, besides, workers are often cheated. But they can't stop working, because their jobs provide their family's health insurance and the margin that allows the family to save. By week's end, many workers told me, they have no energy to take evening English classes or search for better-paying jobs uptown.

Chinatown specializes in the "spot market"—small runs of trendy styles, sewn quickly, so that Seventh Avenue manufacturers who contract the orders to Chinatown can deliver the clothing to stores within a week. Garment workers routinely work Saturdays, and, if a panic is on for a big order, Sundays as well.

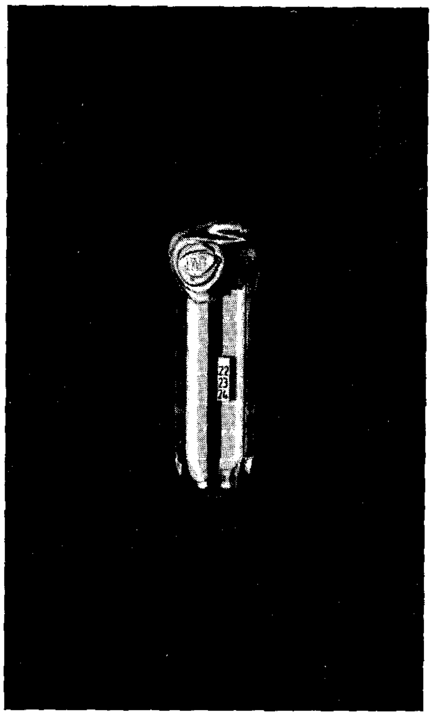
The pressure is extreme. Workers are paid by the piece and do one task all day long. Merrow operators run the machines that sew seams, and are paid from ten cents to twenty cents a seam, perhaps a dollar a garment. Seamstresses add collars, cuffs, zippers, pockets. Piecework that is easy and quick, and therefore lucrative, is called "soy-sauce chicken." No one wants "pig's bones"—tricky garments that take time and so pay little. The lowest-paid workers, who are mostly women in their sixties and seventies, are thread cutters: they snip threads from finished garments. Men or teenagers stitch buttonholes, and steam pressers, all of them men, lay garments on padded ironing boards and, with foot pedals, press the clothing into shape. One man puts stiffening on the shoulder seams of suits, to be heat-sealed against the fabric. All day long, he puts stiffening on the same seam of thousands of suits. The last step is the work of finishers: they sort the garments by size and shape, put them on hangers, and trim off any excess threads that remain before bagging the garments in plastic. Chinatown doesn't design, cut, or market; it only sews.



Recently, piece rates have been dropping, as a result of tough competition. Koreans have muscled into the spot market in the last five years, and Korean factory owners are incorrigibly anti-union. The I.L.G.W.U. says that Koreans run true sweatshops—worse than the ones in Chinatown. Only in Korean shops, which are mostly in the Garment District, do workers earn two hundred dollars for fifty-four hours, I was told by Jeff Hermanson, the director of organizing at the I.L.G.W.U. But in the four Chinatown shops I visited last year everyone put in at least sixty hours a week, some for less than two hundred dollars. A handful earned over three hundred dollars. The majority made about four dollars an hour, slightly less than burger flippers in McDonald's working nine to five at minimum wage—four dollars and twenty-five cents an hour. John Lam, one of Chinatown's largest garment contractors, who runs a sixty-million-dollar business, with fourteen factories, pays an average of four dollars and fifty cents an hour.

When piece rates drop below union minimums, or minimum wage, workers silently knuckle under and try to recover the lost wages by working even longer hours. Wing Lam, a labor organizer in Chinatown, pointed out that piece rates are now so low that Hong Kong factories, which compete with Chinatown factories, have moved into the community. "The union doesn't enforce the wage laws, because of, it claims, overseas and nonunion competition," he told me. "There are fewer and fewer Seventh Avenue manufacturers, so when Chinatown contractors offer twenty cents a piece the manufacturers can insist on eighteen cents a piece. If the contractors don't take it, they don't work. You can imagine how low the prices go. Chinatown struck in 1982—twenty thousand women marched in support of the union contract that the owners had rejected. Since then, I've heard of no women sitting down at the machines to strike. A few try, but the contractors close and open under a different name."

One day last year, I accompanied



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Joseph Halik, Gene Lee, and Angelo Valdevitt, inspectors from the Department of Labor's Apparel Industry Task Force, which enforces state labor law in New York's seven thousand garment factories. Hugh McDaid, the chief investigator of the task force, defines a sweatshop this way: "It violates as many laws as it possibly can—minimum-wage laws, workers' compensation, child labor, unemployment, fire safety. The people who run the sweatshops are the most egregious and deliberate of violators."

Many sweatshops in the city take great care to hide their operations. They put up no signs. They shutter their windows, or they block their curtains with wooden planks, so no one can peek around the edges of the curtains into a shop. They bolt and shutter fire doors. They roll down their outside metal gratings, so the shops look abandoned. Only by putting an ear to the door and hearing the drone of machines can inspectors find such a shop. The sweatshops that honeycomb Chinatown, however, don't hide. They perpetually need workers, and advertise jobs on squares of red paper or cloth pasted on the ground floor of tenements. On East Broadway, we found a tenement with a typical sign on the door: "MERROW OPERATORS AND TWO THREAD CUTTERS NEEDED."

On the third floor of the tenement was Waylon Sportswear, a new union shop. Thirty-eight middle-aged women who were bent at forty-degree angles over computerized Japanese sewing machines lifted their eyes just briefly from their work as we entered. The high-speed machines shrieked like buzz saws. As we made our way down an aisle piled with boxes and clothing, a girl in a red-and-white diamond-patterned sweater and black jeans grabbed her schoolbag and ran for the door. Halik and Lee caught her. Her little brother waited by their mother, a seamstress. "I'm sure the boy was working, but I didn't see him," Halik said. The girl was slender, and wore gold hoop earrings under her long hair. The boy was eight or nine. Mother and son watched fearfully as Lee asked the girl's name and address.

"This girl comes here about 3:30 P.M.," Lee translated. "She's sixteen years old, arrived from China about three months ago. Goes to school here from Brooklyn, where they live, so she and her mother can travel on the subway in the evening and morning together. She's paid by the piece, and makes an average of thirty dollars a week. Slightly over minimum wage for about eight hours." Lee told the teen-ager that as a minor she could not do this work unless she had a certificate from the Board of Education.

Waylon was a mess: scraps and boxes littered the room, which was about twenty-five feet by seventy. Its floor was cardboard nailed onto wood slats. The grilled windows were grimy, the fire escapes blocked and locked, without exit signs. The toilet was dirty, and there was no toilet paper. But the room was light and was decorated with some Chinese calendars and New Year's greetings. In one corner, incense burned at a shrine to the warrior Gung Gong, a good-luck fixture in every Cantonese business. Steam pressers and thread cutters worked on mounds of orange-and-turquoise Hawaiian shirts at one end of the room. At the other end, seamstresses sewed at long tables, five or six to a table, or at individual work stations. They wore masks over their noses to protect themselves against lint, and aprons over their clothing. Their lunches hung in plastic bags above their heads, hooked on to their machines. On the window ledges were radios and jars of instant tea. One woman sewed a doll-sized pair of pants and held them up, making them dance on her fingers.

"These ladies are here for the duration," Halik said. "They've resigned themselves to that, and they make the most of it. It's piece rate, so it's more flexible. If a lady wants to leave for an hour and buy fish for dinner, she will, and the boss won't get on her."

Meanwhile, Lee and Valdevitt were questioning another young woman. She earned a hundred and fifty dollars a week on the average, she said, or two dollars and eighty cents an hour. She was twenty-one years old. She began work at 8:30 A.M., and usually worked fifty-five hours a week, sometimes including Saturdays. Lee jotted a few figures on a pad, checking her wages: she should be paid the minimum wage (then three dollars and eighty cents an hour) for forty hours, he noted, plus time and a half for fifteen hours of overtime, and a bonus, an extra hour's pay a day, for working more than ten hours continuously every day. He discovered that the woman was being cheated by over a hundred dollars a week. The woman betrayed no surprise. Lee promised to collect the back pay for her.

HELLO, I'M PEGGY.
PEGGY, PEGGY ♪ BO BEGGY... ♪ BANANA FANNA FO FEGGY, ♪ FEE FI MO MEGGY, PEGGY!
I'M SORRY I EVER SAID THAT WAS CUTE.
Leo Cullum

Other violations—the absence of exit signs and the blocked fire-escape doors, and also aisles less than three feet wide and loose wires hanging from the ceiling—would be referred to the Fire Department. Lee asked the women if they had any complaints. The women said that this shop was like any other—they were all the same.

Child labor and cheating workers of overtime are endemic in Chinatown, and Waylon is far from the worst offender, the inspectors said. "You see five or six minors in one place, working as thread trimmers, or standing by the machines, handing their mothers bundles of cloth," Halik said. "By saving that step, a mother might take home an extra three bucks a day. The boss doesn't care—it's all on the piece rate. It's either paying the kids or paying the mothers time and a half. That's how they survive."

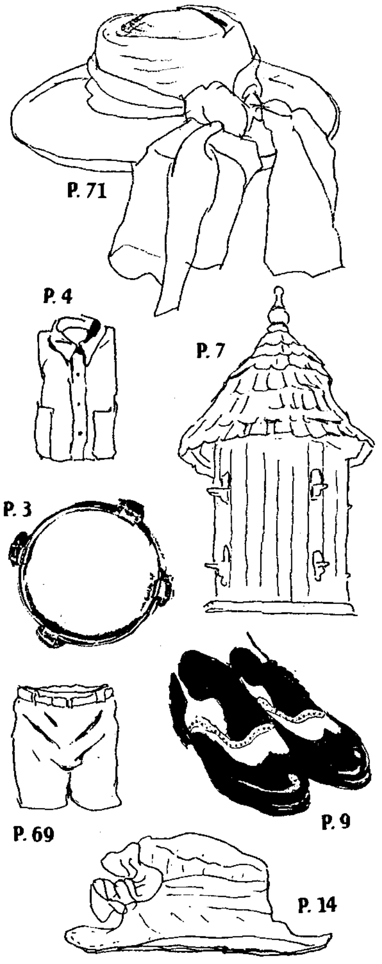
"The worst are basement shops," Valdevitt said. "No exit doors. Child labor working fifty to sixty hours a week for three dollars and twenty-five cents an hour, under minimum wage. No records whatsoever. No overtime. No time cards. No ventilation. I've seen eight- and nine-year-olds working in these basements."

"Bosses let workers take sewing home—that's a very big violation," Halik said. "Especially in the Bronx, you'll see a lot of homework. Whole Vietnamese and Cambodian families stay home and make bows and hair bands—the ones sold at newsstands. We tagged a few big operations for industrial-homework violations—fifty to sixty people. It's cash all the way down the line: ten cents a piece, dollar a dozen, for cutting the ribbon, tying it up, gluing the clip onto it. Asians don't go on welfare. If you have four or five family members making hair bands ten to twelve hours a day, seven days a week, you scrape by."

"In Hong Kong, they do skilled work," Lee said. "Here, the contractors just throw the workers at a machine and see how many pieces they can turn out in a day."

"We've found some places giving people three rubber checks in a month and then calling Immigration to raid the place. The feds got wise to it finally," Halik said.

"The new immigrants are an intimidated labor pool," Hugh McDaid told me. "Chinese are not acculturated



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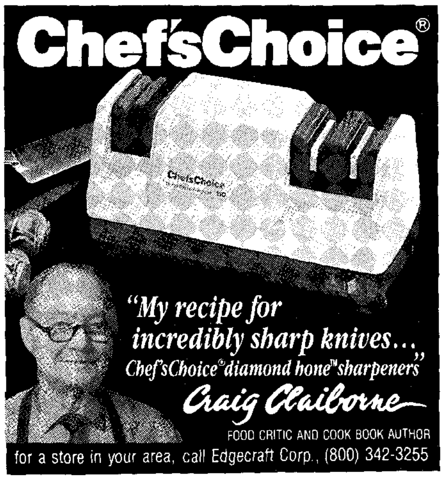

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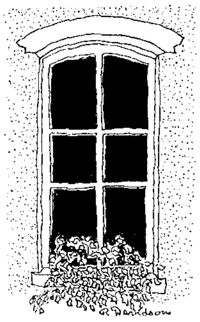
to their labor rights. They come from cultures where the government is the union is the employer, and they're not used to the government enforcing laws in their favor. They don't report violations themselves."

"The number of individual grievances taken to arbitration is probably lower than in any other local in the country," May Chen, of the I.L.G.W.U., said. "Workers here are very frightened. Their employers blacklist them if they complain. It's a small community, it's easy to get ostracized, and then they don't work. A few years ago, an employee took her case all the way to arbitration. Her employer published her picture in the paper and warned everyone not to hire her. A lot of people remember that case."



Factory owners, for their part, complain that newcomers are spoiled by socialism, and shirk their work. One large Hong Kong contractor told me, "The people from China still have that attitude from socialism that whether or not you do your work you get paid. They're not aggressive. A few years ago, they liked to have a nap in the afternoon." She shook her head in strong disapproval. "In America, you have to work very hard. Malaysia, Thailand, it's hot in the afternoon, so they shut off everything. I can't have that here. It might influence others. Malaysians, Thais, mainland Chinese don't like to work long hours. I tell them no nap or I lay them off."

At all the factories I saw—the four in Chinatown, and ten others around the city—children were either working or waiting for their mothers after school. The union is loath to enforce prohibitions against children in factories, because the workers fear that if their children go home to empty apartments after school they'll fall in with the gangs. At a factory on Broadway, four or five children were playing among the fifty-five workers. They ran in the aisles or sat on piles of finished clothing and did their homework. In one corner, a baby slept in a carriage. Bi Lui Chen, playing by her mother at the end of a row, told me she was eleven years old and in the fifth grade. She jigged around in a pink outfit. Every day, she waits three hours in the factory after school for her mother to finish work, she said, and sometimes she sews. "I can do it! I can do it!" she exclaimed proudly, pointing to the high-speed machines. "The factory is afraid the inspectors come. So sometimes, when I have work to do, I do it here, a little sewing. Sometimes not. Just for fun," she reassured me. Bi Lui evidently knew that she shouldn't say she sewed for money.

Both of Bi Lui's parents are garment workers. Her father, a steam presser, works in midtown, and earns more than most steam pressers in Chinatown: forty cents a shirt, sixty cents a cheong-sam—the traditional Chinese silk dress, slit at the sides—and a dollar, the top rate, for complicated clothes. Chen declined to tell me his earnings. I met him for dinner in a restaurant, and in Cantonese he said he was "fiddling with the taxation problem"; in other words, he was underreporting his income—a ubiquitous practice in Chinatown. Many immigrants from the People's Republic, where most people pay no income tax, or Hong Kong, where the maximum rate is seventeen per cent, cannot bear to pay the I.R.S. Mrs. Chen works sixty hours a week, Monday through Saturday, for between two hundred and three hundred dollars. Together, the Chens probably earn about twenty-four thousand dollars a year, to support a family of four.

"Life here is simple and boring," Chen told me. In the six years he has been here, he has left the city only twice, to see entertainers at Atlantic City. He enjoys getting together with other garment workers at an association on Canal Street for an hour or two after work, and playing a friendly game of mah-jongg before dinner. Membership is three dollars. "They have no political talk at all," he said. At home, he watches TV, usually English-language programs, because he can guess the words. Bi Lui likes Hong Kong soap operas.

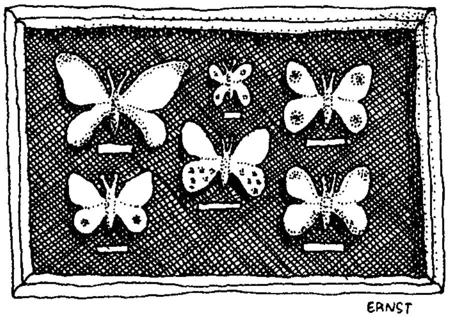
At first, Chen told me he had emigrated from Canton to make money, but as he relaxed he said that the real reason was that his father had been declared a non-person in China, and Chen was afraid that his children would suffer as he had. Chen's father's sister had married a military officer and defected to Taiwan. Consequently, his father was jailed, and Chen was not allowed to continue his schooling to upper secondary school, the equivalent of high school. He began farming rice and wheat, living, as his family had for generations, on remittances from relatives in Chinatown. "It broke my heart," he said quietly. "I was the brightest in my family." Chen's family circle here comprises about fifty people, among them his father, one grandmother, all his brothers and sisters, and their families. None of them speak English or leave Chinatown. His grandmother supported Chen for several years so he could adjust to America and learn English, but he has given up. He complained about having to work longer hours than he did on his farm in China, and said he was too tired in the evening to go to English classes. He said he did not expect he would ever become a citizen, because he wouldn't learn English. Bi Lui translated for the family. She told me she remembered that her first-grade teacher, angry at her slow progress in English, pinched her cheeks until they bled. Her parents approved: the teacher is the most respected figure in China. "Harsh is the tradition in China, harsh can make more obedient and capable children," her father said. Some days when I saw Bi Lui, she was in a rage, and wouldn't talk to me in English. Those were the days when her teachers had criticized her as too slow.

"Many adults are illiterate in Chinatown," I was told by David Chen (he is not related to Bi Lui's family), the executive director of the Chinese-American Planning Council, the neighborhood's largest social-service agency. "So the kids run the households. It contradicts the Chinese way of life, which is to respect the elders. It leads to a lot of problems: the kids hang out; there's not enough bilingual instruction; there's not enough housing; there's not enough parental guidance, pressure in school for performance. They're all supposed to be stereotypical whiz kids. And those who aren't end up in gangs. Face comes into it: 'Mr. Lee's kids did well, why didn't you?'"

I met many people like Bi Lui's father—isolated, upset about Chinatown, but resigned to making a buck and to always being strangers in America. Over and over, I heard how frightening Chinatown was, how bad crime was. But residents feel trapped. They don't know enough English to deal with the police, they are too frightened to try to fight crime alone, and they are too suspicious of American authorities to help them improve Chinatown.

ONE of the few relaxations that Chinese enjoy is gambling. *Low faan* can't get into Chinatown's illegal gambling parlors, so at eight o'clock on a Monday night—waiters' night off—in November Connie Pang and I boarded a bus outside the Silver Palace for a trip to Bally's casino in Atlantic City. Chinese are some of the casinos' best customers. Every evening, about a hundred people leave Chinatown in buses to gamble all night, and every day four hundred or five hundred depart to gamble all afternoon. In 1988, during the Chinese New Year—the principal holiday of the year, and the one day when most Chinese don't work—eight thousand people went to Atlantic City, in a giant snake of a hundred and twenty buses. About the same number have gone every year since then. The casinos are so eager to have these Chinese players that they pay a bonus of ten dollars to each customer, and also subsidize the running costs of the eight Chinese companies that operate the buses. Some casinos have Chinese marketing managers as well. Their job is to think up new ways to keep the buses loaded and the players betting. Like the regular marketing managers, they analyze videotapes and computerized records of the big players' games, and decide who are big enough spenders for the casinos to lay out money to bring them in often. The casinos send limos to drive them, or helicopters to fly them; put them up free in fancy suites; and extend them large credit lines. At the casinos with the most Chinese business—Caesars Boardwalk Regency, Trump Castle, the Tropicana, the Sands—some players who are regulars have million-dollar credit lines.

Outside our bus windows, all of Chinatown was hurrying by; people were shoving, yanking children, bumping each other with lumpy bags of groceries in the fierce cold. A dim-sum peddler stirring his sizzling bits of dough wore huge, stiff mittens. Barbecued ducks hanging in the windows of the Cantonese restaurants looked tough and red. There were twenty-four people scattered around the bus, all Chinese except me and another white woman.



A scowling man opposite us turned out to have a sense of humor. "I'm a noodle-maker," he said. "I make rice noodles on Green Street in Brooklyn for last two years. I was born in Guangdong Province. I come to Atlantic City once every two weeks." He was dark-skinned, and had thin legs like sticks under his jeans, and a sparse mustache. Under a blazer and a red V-neck sweater he wore a T-shirt. He told me he was twenty-eight years old. "I come for the blackjack," he said. "I can only gamble at night, because I work during the day. I can't be tired tomorrow, because I have a lot of noodles to make." He giggled. He would get back to Chinatown tomorrow morning at seven and go straight to work, he said, having had at most three hours of sleep. And he was losing one of those hours talking to us.

His eyes twinkled as he explained why Chinese love gambling. "Chinese are born different from *low faan*," he said. "Born to like gambling. Chinese do not have other forms of entertainment for their leisure time. *Low faan* like to picnic or take trips. Chinese don't picnic or travel, because they don't know English to read the signs and maps, and they don't know the way home. Plus the Chinese like to eat more. When they have a little money, they like to eat it all up. And the third reason is that going on trips is spending money, and going to gamble is getting money back." He said emphatically, "Chinese *like* money, and they *like* to gamble."

He went on to say, "Americans don't have to invest as much in their children. Once their children grow up, they go away. If Americans are broke, they can ask the government for money from Social Security and welfare. For Chinese, it is completely different. Once we have some money, we save it, invest it, and think how to put the money into our child, because we expect our children to stay in our home until after they are grown up. They live with us until they are married—and the men, after they are married, take care of their parents."

He yawned, then giggled. His wife and son didn't know he was on his way to Atlantic City, he said. He and his brothers share an apartment in Chinatown. His wife, his parents, and his sisters live in Jamaica, Queens, and other parts of the borough. He pays for the apartment that his wife and his parents share. Sometimes he sees his wife if he gets off work early. Otherwise, he spends Saturday night with her.

Out of his pay of fourteen hundred dollars a month, he said, he can afford to use between five hundred and six hundred dollars for gambling. Sometimes he stays away from gambling three months in a row. "Chinese have a saying: Nine out of ten gamblers are broke, and none can buy a piece of land." Gambling has a stigma in Chinese culture, he assured me, contrary to what others had said. But he didn't think he was addicted. "The feeling is odd. Sometimes the idea comes into my head that I want to gamble, and I just go. I make no plans in advance, so I don't think I am addicted."

We wished him luck. He nodded, and thanked us ceremoniously.

We arrived at Bally's an hour and a half late, and all the passengers dashed off into the crowds. The huge casino resounded with the frenzied clanging of slot machines. Connie and I had to keep moving. The pit boss gave us the eye if we watched one table a long time. We were also being observed through the ceiling, which had one-way mirrors in it. Video cameras, some of them overhead, were taping the tables, so casino employees seated at computers could keep tallies of the bets of big winners and losers.

Chinese, we noticed, went for big payoffs. They clustered at the baccarat, roulette, and blackjack tables. Blackjack, for instance, paid off three to two. Table after table of blackjack were all Chinese. They didn't bother with craps or the wheel of fortune. Large parties of Caucasians at these tables whooped it up and egged each other on. The Chinese played silently. A number of Chinese women in their thirties were gambling in groups. They looked prosperous—like businesswomen, not Chinatown women. One, in a pants suit and pearls, was playing alone, and very successfully, at blackjack, with thousand-dollar chips in every rack.

Well into the morning, we spotted the noodle-maker, concentrating darkly. We watched from a few feet away, and he played steadily, cautiously, without acknowledging us. Finally, Connie and I waited out the last hour at the bar, glassy-eyed.

At 4:30 A.M., we got back on the bus. Every seat was taken now, and the gamblers lighted cigarettes to shake off the anxiety of the night. We asked the noodle-maker how it had gone. He had not had luck tonight. He was considerably diminished, and curled up like a snail inside his blazer to sleep. The tour guide accompanying the bus, an ethnic Chinese with a sad story of escape from Vietnam in a boat attacked by pirates, admonished me. "It is bad manners to ask how someone has done," he said. "These are the hard core. They never show any emotion when they lose."

The bus of sleeping gamblers pulled into Chinatown at dawn. The gamblers woke with a start, stamped their feet, and filed out.

THE more I talked to Chinatown residents, the more fascinated I became by their drive to gamble away money they have spent hours of toil to earn. The Off-Track Betting outlet at Chatham Square, one of two outlets in

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THEIR HOUSE

They've built an understanding
with their pillars and two-by-fours
and the crushed stone that goes into cement,
a way of cutting the dark to fit.
Moths flicker on the shiny lit surfaces.
There is a border of red and white tulips
and impetuous birds sing. She learns to cook
such things as floating island.
He calls it eggs in snow. They watch the wind
catch up the narrow yellow leaves
and listen for the knuckle-cracking thunder.
Then great stones begin to roll.
Rain falls. And on the side of the woods
it falls again just for them
from the trees, glad to repeat itself.

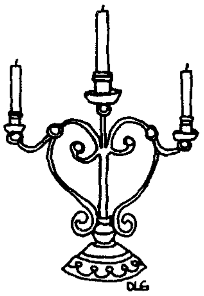
One day he notices an orange fungus
that has twisted over a tree stump.
It reminds him of his childhood, stiff and unreal.
And at night something flings bark and acorns
against the door. The pool,
green with algae, begins to sink out of sight.
Soon they forget the bright tanager,
its one note sucked through a straw.
Then no step in her garden
makes anything grow. Then theirs
is not a ship sailing with the wind
but a house with its chimney blown away.

When they leave, boards are knocking,
swollen out of place. Raccoons scratch
in the attic. It is hot and moist
under the rubble of their lives,
ideal conditions for growing. That summer,
new owners are moving themselves in,
younger, quicker. You can see
the sweat on their foreheads.
The woman in her flip-flops shoots ahead.
What does she carry in her arms? Ah,
she is hurrying in to feed their enormous baby.

—Elaine Terranova

• •

Chinatown, is the top revenue producer of ninety-six in the city. It is nine years old, and it has topped the charts every year. An average of ninety thousand dollars is wagered there every day—three and a half times the citywide average. The other OTB in Chinatown, on Lafayette Street, is consistently the second- or third-highest grossing in the system. It and the Chatham Square branch together have an average of a hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars of bets a day. Close to a thousand customers wager at Chatham Square every day. On Sundays and holidays, the crowds of men are impenetrable, the room is gray with smoke, and the lines at the windows are ten deep. Chinese bet about the same amount on a race as everyone else in the city—an average of forty dollars.



In Chinatown, gamblers begin with spare change. If they lose that, they go into family money. And if they lose that they work extra shifts. Many gamblers are waiters, and since there are twenty-five hundred Chinese restaurants in metropolitan New York they can scrounge around for an extra five or six hours of work a day. Garment workers pool their money and bet. A Chinese man who works for the OTB told me, "The OTB always looks for Italian neighborhoods first, then Chinese. The Italians are macho—they like to throw their money around. They boom out, 'A thousand dollars on a horse!' They bet fifteen thousand dollars to make five hundred dollars. The Chinese are more reserved. They whisper, 'A hundred dollars on a horse.' They put down a hundred to make a sure five dollars. They'll go for the long shot, too, but they'll hedge with the favorite."

Over and over again, I heard Chinese say that they have no other recreation. "Look, gambling in our culture is not illegal. It may be illegal in America, but we didn't make those rules," one Chinatown resident said. Many are wary of movies, because gangs have shot innocent moviegoers. They don't much patronize the arts. The community has few libraries, only one park, no night clubs, and few bars; private night clubs where Chinese sip Rémy and dance with bar girls are in midtown. Non-gamblers offered sociological explanations for the Chinese obsession with gambling. A Chinese nurse in a neighborhood clinic laughed when I asked her why so many Chinese gamble. "All they know is work, work, work—seven days a week. Gambling is the only means they have to relieve their stress," she said. Another Chinatown native told me, "Chinese are used to working in dirty, dingy old Chinatown. Atlantic City is like Shangri-La to them. One day away from the grind." The labor organizer Wing Lam says that Chinese gamble because they are exploited. "The Chinese see they can't get rich working long hours," he explained. "A lot give up hope. They need a painkiller. They spend six hundred dollars on baccarat the way the Irish spend money on alcohol. It's not in their blood—it's poor people escaping reality." David Chen, of the Chinese-American Planning Council, offered a similar reason: "You work so hard, no time to spend the money or invest it wisely, you gamble and see it double—so they hope."

Chinatown's illegal gaming halls are a sort of mini-Atlantic City. The differences between Atlantic City and Chinatown are that the tongs run or sanction most of the illegal parlors, the police periodically bust them, and they are not plush or safe. Sometimes the gangs who guard them, or gangs from other cities, rob them. Most of the illegal halls are permanent, but a few float: a humid basement parlor with brown-paper-covered metal tables and Formica siding on the walls can be a flower shop next week. They are expensive to run but very lucrative, because they are open sixteen, or even twenty-four, hours a day. One Chinatown resident broke down the costs for me: "They pay rent, they pay their employees—they have a pit boss, hosts who know everyone and can get them to come in. Investors and partners put up a cage, but they can't get Wells Fargo to pick up the proceeds, so you have gangs. You got to pay the tong a percentage of the gross, you maybe got to pay the local gendarmes—they know exactly where you are. Why do they not hit them all the time? Then, how do you keep the gang members guarding your place happy? Apartments, girls, lawyers, guns. You need a kitchen and a chef, so when a guy hits it big he can stop and celebrate with a

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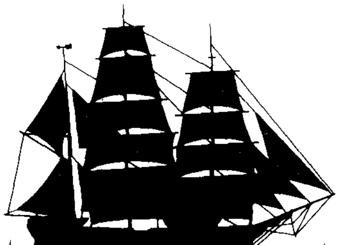

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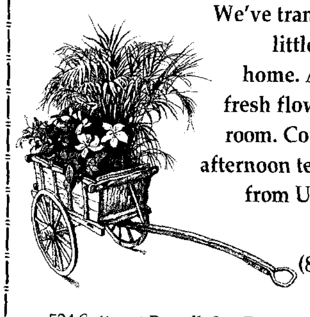


meal. Every once in a while, you need a Shanghai sailor to come in and do a hit, so your guys don't get burned out. It's convenient that a sailor can get on a ship and get lost. It's been happening like this for the last forty years—every three, four, five years, there's a murder. You sit there with your brow furrowed, but a Chinese from the community will hear about the hit and say, 'Ah, the guy was probably dipping.' "

In the illegal joints, mah-jongg, thirteen-card (a variant of poker), fan-tan, pai gow, and tein gow are the most popular games. Pai gow, which is played with dominoes, has serious betting—a thousand-dollar minimum in some games, and sometimes there is four hundred thousand dollars on the table at once. Fan-tan can make a gambler a fortune in no time. A random number of buttons are put in a bowl, and are then removed four at a time. Players bet on the number—three, two, one, or none—that will be left at the end. Depending on the type of bet, there are three rates of winning, and in less than an hour fifty dollars can explode into thousands of dollars.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars are in play any night in Chinatown's basements. Law-enforcement officials have unconfirmed reports that in Fujianese gambling parlors profits run to a million dollars a week. Losses are also steep. Loan sharks prey on gamblers. Many stories circulate of Chinatown restaurants sold to pay fan-tan debts. Working-class losers pay off debts by becoming couriers smuggling heroin on flights from the Far East.

"No matter where they go, Chinese gamble," Justin Yu, a former head of Chinatown's journalists' union, notes. "On horses, dogs, chickens, numbers, sports, elections, bicycles, motorcycle competitions, whatever you can think of—they will bet on who will cross the street. I'm from Taiwan. There they gamble on everything—sometimes losing their wives, because they lose their houses and their wives split."

The real-estate broker Dean Lui is a wise observer of Chinatown life. "Chinese gamble because they think it is the fastest way to earn money," he told me. "Without a doubt, Chinese like money more than Americans do. Americans enjoy travelling, sports, a vacation. They don't care about money. They make it and they spend it. But not the Chinese! They really care about it. Every Chinese likes to be very proud. Chinese really want to help friends and relatives. It's for face. Big face. 'You have a great big face,' we say. If you have money, you send some to mainland China to your relatives. Every year before the New Year's festival, you'll see long lines at the bank of people sending money out. Sometimes they send a hundred dollars, sometimes a thousand dollars. Banks charge from five to ten dollars per transaction. Myself, I received a letter from my aunt and uncle in the country in China. 'I want to buy a new house. Can you please send us several thousand dollars?' " Lui laughed. "I sent them five hundred dollars only. We are from Far East. If you don't send money, you will feel that your relatives think you are not successful."

OLD Chinatown exists only in traces. The shops are gone, the people are gone, and few records were ever kept. Chinese are ashamed of the bad old days of racism, and few wish to rake up Bachelor Society Chinatown, the culture that arose under anti-Chinese laws in effect between 1882 and 1943—a salty, raw, chauvinist society, made up almost exclusively of laundrymen and laborers. Some of the fifty old-timers who recently taped oral histories for the Chinatown History Museum, the one local institution dedicated to documenting the past, felt compelled to ask the museum not to release the tapes before their deaths.

Two forms of racism created Chinatowns: Chinese and American. The clash set the pattern for future discrimination against other Asians. In the mid-nineteenth century, when the first Cantonese came to San Francisco in the gold rush, there were no immigration quotas. By and large, the Chinese never intended to stay long—just long enough to get rich, and go home big shots. Most were peasants; a few were members of secret triad societies, outlaw groups dedicated to overthrowing China's Manchu rulers.

At first, Chinese were welcomed, but soon their willingness to work for very low wages enraged white miners. The miners killed a few, ran some off the mines, and taxed the rest. Still, more Chinese immigrated, lured by stories of extravagant wealth in Gam Saan, the "Gold Mountain"—their term for California. After building the Central Pacific Railroad, they competed with whites for jobs as canners, fishermen, and industrial and agricultural workers in California, and endured many forms of discrimination; they were even forbidden to walk on the sidewalks with the bamboo poles they used to transport goods. In his book "Chinatown, N.Y.," Peter Kwong, a Taiwanese immigrant and a political scientist at the State University of New York at Old Westbury, explains that organized labor laid the blame for the depression of the eighteen-seventies on the sixty-five thousand or so male Chinese in the West. Chinese were easy to scapegoat: they worked for any wages, at any job, subsisting on nothing, it seemed. They lived apart in Chinatowns to avoid white barbarians, and they smoked opium, wore their hair in queues, burned incense before idols, and didn't bother to learn English, because they were here only to find fortune.

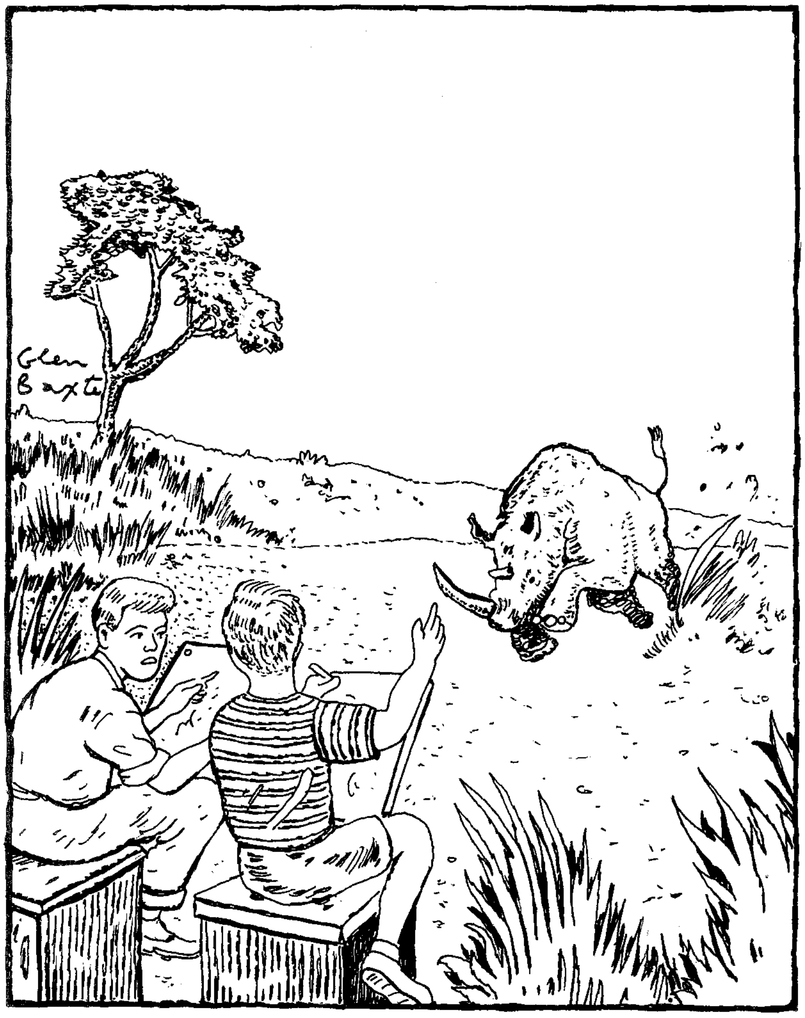
Across the West in the eighteen-seventies and eighties, Chinese were murdered and their homes were burned. White mobs from the Cherry Creek Diggings, near Denver, beat Chinese and looted their stores, while a lone gunman defended the immigrants, saying, "If you kill Wong, who in hell will do my laundry?" The historian Shih-shan Henry Tsai chronicles the riots that exploded in the region in "The Chinese Experience in America": in Montana, Chinese were expelled from the mines; in Tacoma, vigilantes hauled them from their homes and ran them out of the city; in Rock Springs, Wyoming, miners, enraged that Chinese would not join a union, murdered twenty-eight of them; in Los Angeles, nineteen were lynched. In some places, Chinese were killed for sport. Cowboys bound Chinese to steers and drove them out of town. Some newspapers thought the violence hilarious. In a cartoon of the period, Uncle Sam inveighs, "I hate the nigger 'cause he's a citizen, and I hate the 'yellow dog' because he won't become one."

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 barred Chinese laborers or their wives from entering the United States. It excluded Chinese from most occupations, including manufacturing and mining. It also forbade them from becoming naturalized citizens. President Grover Cleveland supported the act, declaring the Chinese "an element ignorant of our Constitution and laws, impossible of assimilation with our people, and dangerous to our peace and welfare." Some states denied Chinese the right to testify against whites in courts. Many states prohibited them from owning property or from marrying whites. Twenty-five states required that Chinese children be taught in separate schools. After 1924, an American woman who married an "alien ineligible for citizenship" lost her own citizenship, and another law that took effect the same year barred the immigration of all Chinese women.

Such laws persuaded many Chinese to go home, but some dived for safety into Chinatowns until the Second World War, when the Exclusion Act was repealed. In Chinatowns, men lived without wives or children. Most became laundrymen, though nowhere else in the world had Chinese washed clothes for a living; they did so here simply because laundries were permitted under the act and were cheap to open. The segregated ghettos of men were, inevitably, tenderloins, with gambling halls, opium dens, and prostitutes. Police stayed out of the ghettos, and let Chinese settle their own affairs. In that way, too, American racism turned Chinatowns in on themselves.

Family associations, composed of people with the same surname, provided newcomers with jobs and loans. In district associations, composed of people from the same area, elders settled disputes, since Chinese did not use American courts. The Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association governed every Chinatown. Its word was law, and it urged Chinese never to become Americanized. It didn't have to teach Chinese to distrust outsiders and authorities; they knew they risked beatings if they left Chinatowns.

The tongs served as police in Chinatowns, since white cops stayed out. But tong fought tong; these protection societies for weak family associations, first formed in San Francisco about 1850, committed most of Chinatowns' crimes. Merchants began the On Leong tong; criminals formed the Hip Sing tong. These and five or six other prominent tongs carved up the streets of every Chinatown into business districts where only their members or approved non-members could open shop. A Hip Sing walking on an On Leong street could provoke war: hired assassins, usually members of the triads, avenged the insult with murder. The arrangement was oddly delicate: the assassins, called hatchet men, after the weapons they used, fought proxy wars. These allowed enemies to greet each other on the street, knowing that they had been avenged but that they had not risked their own lives. Tongs also controlled the gambling halls and prostitution. Tong bosses owned slave girls, young prostitutes smuggled in from China, and lived off their earnings. In New York City, tong wars were a rite of spring from about 1910 until the early nineteen-thirties, when the United States Attorney in Manhattan clamped down. During the worst bloodshed, children had to be escorted to school by armed tong guards, and business was at a standstill.



"ONE REALLY MUST PAY ATTENTION TO THE SHADING AT THE TIP OF THE HORN, CECIL," ADVISED TIM.

Tourists in those days went to Chinatowns to ogle opium dens, slave girls, and sites of lurid tong murders. Today, liberal Chinese, influenced by the Asian-American movement, skip over this period or ridicule it as an invention of white journalists for the titillation of their readers. Stories of Chinese slavers kidnapping white women, the subject of Frank Norris's famous tale "The Third Circle," were probably salaciously exaggerated, but there is no question that Chinatowns were tough and pervaded by fear. Many residents were illegal "paper sons," with false identification papers and fake names.

In New York in the eighteen-nineties, in the three-block colony of Mott, Pell, and Doyers Streets, which was settled by Chinese fleeing anti-Chinese violence in the West, shops overflowed onto the sidewalks. Colorful paper lanterns fluttered from storefronts. Toy sellers, shoemakers, flower sellers, pipe-bowl menders, fish and produce sellers sus-

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pended their wares in baskets from bamboo poles. The ratio of men to women was twenty-seven to one. The streets were thronged with men in dark tunics and dark leggings, with dark felt hats over their black queues. The few children (born to merchants, who were exempted from the Exclusion Act and allowed to bring in Chinese wives) glowed in citron and fuchsia silks against the monochromatic men. Slave girls were the only women allowed on the streets. According to one journalist's count, Chinatown in 1898, with a population of some three thousand, had seven hundred gamblers, four hundred and fifty hatchet men, at least twenty opium dens, one annual opera, and yearly poetry-writing competitions, and all but eighty-four of the male residents were bachelors.

THERE is only one shop left from the early days of Chinatown. Paul Lee, a hip forty-one-year-old actor and an operator of gambling-bus tours, owns Quong Yuen Shing & Company, at 32 Mott Street, a store that his grandfather Lok B. Lee, a pillar of Bachelor Society Chinatown, managed in the eighteen-nineties. Lee showed me around, grousing about the preservationists in Chinatown who want to mothball the place as a museum. "The store started in 1891—it was a general store and a mail drop for the old sojourners," he said. "They changed money here, sent money back to China, got their supplies here. Many people lived here. When I was a kid, in the basement we had cages of wild animals—deer, raccoons. We'd slaughter them for the old medicines. Then the American Medical Association attacked Chinese herbalists, and we took the stock off the shelves."

Quong Yuen Shing, which has its original fixtures, is dark and dusty, as though it were already a museum. A fifteen-foot-long gilded screen of peacocks and chrysanthemums, carved in China a century ago, frames the former herb pharmacy. Behind it, a salesman uses an abacus. Bare wooden floors creak. A few paper lanterns hang from a flaking tin ceiling. Old wooden counters on one side display tea sets, and in cabinets behind them are Buddhas, mah-jongg sets, pictures of butterflies and peonies made of wheat-straw, and, tucked away in drawers, silk handkerchiefs such as the laundrymen, the store's first customers, sent their best clients at Christmas at the turn of the century.

"Let's go in the back. I'll show you that this place hasn't been changed in a hundred years," Lee said. We squeezed down a narrow corridor, passing small rooms stacked to the ceiling with cardboard boxes of goods from the People's Republic. "We won't sell the store—we'll just be driven out," he said, looking at the incredible disarray. "I'm big in Chinese vegetable seeds." Nodding toward what looked like piles of Monopoly money, he said, "That fake paper money is ghost money for ancestor worship. If someone dies, you burn it. The burning appeases the ghost."

At the far end of the corridor is a large room filled with a jumble of boxes and crates, and to one side a bathroom is enclosed in a closet that reaches three-quarters of the way to the ceiling. "This was open, if you can imagine," Lee said. "At a table, we'd have twenty guys, coolies on staff, eating. They slept here." He pointed to a loft bed on the roof of the bathroom. "That's a luxury spot—that guy had the whole nine yards. We had workers downstairs, too, on racks like bunks in a submarine."

Lee introduced me to his aunt. "She knows all the family history," he said.

His aunt, eighty-two years old, begs me, out of modesty, not to identify her. "Please don't make me stand out like a sore finger," she said. "Chinese would consider it boasting if I gave my name." She went on to tell me, "Chinese were nobodies in the old days. You couldn't fight for naturalization. There was a great deal of discrimination. That's why many Chinese boys and girls in the old days never applied to a university—because the parents said, 'What's the use? You'll end up in a restaurant or a laundry.' In the twenties, thirties, forties, there was no point in going uptown for a job. If it was an important job, someone else got it.

"My father and mother wouldn't have let me marry a white person. All my social and professional life, I knew Chinese—the only white people I ever met were at college. They didn't ask me out. At the time, it was forbidden in our community to marry whites.

"My parents had never been to school. They had no idea what a library was. My mother asked me, 'What kind of place is it where they let you borrow books freely?' She sent my father out with me to see what it was. He just worked from the day he came over to the day he died, and yet, comparatively, he was Westernized." Her father, Lok B. Lee, confounded Chinatown by sending his six daughters and his son, Peter, to college. "Women in Chinese culture were rarely educated—his attitude was very advanced," his daughter said. "My father was king. I never dared express my likes or dislikes. No, I didn't long to. We never rebelled. Chinese are taught to hide their feelings, respect their elders. My parents didn't tell us their parents' names. They didn't reveal their pasts, or even their birthdays. They were superstitious. Chinese in general don't discuss birthdays. Their belief is that if you talk about something good all the time, the evil spirits, the *yein*, will overhear you and cause harm. We never knew, for example, the year my father emigrated.

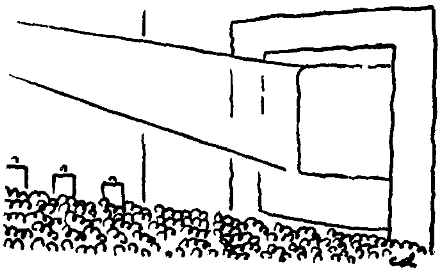
"I couldn't join the Girl Scouts or any clubs. My mother didn't want me to go. See, the trouble was she didn't know anything. She had bound feet and couldn't walk. They said in China no one would marry you otherwise. The original purpose was to keep wives at home, keep them virtuous. But who would want to marry a woman with bound feet who couldn't go anywhere? I was Westernized, you see.

"Once, Father thought of buying a house in Brooklyn, so we could have a back yard. 'Go yourself,' Mother said. 'I don't speak English.' She'd have been a prisoner. At least on Mott Street she could look out the window. What she enjoyed most was all the activity of the Catholic church across the street. They had baptisms, weddings, Sunday school—always activity to watch. In a country place, she wouldn't even have been able to speak to her neighbors. My father realized that she was right. She couldn't even get out of the house to shop. She telephoned the orders to Father in the store, and a boy ran and did her shopping. People don't know anything about these matters now, because after 1912, when Sun Yat-sen overthrew the Manchus and established a republic, no one in her right mind would bind her feet. All the men cut their queues, too."

Peter Lee, Paul's father, is a mild-mannered man with a small frame, younger by a decade than his sister. One morning, as he watched over the store, he told me, "Until the nineteen-forties, we were confined here. We couldn't buy a house outside. New York had no law against it, as some states did—it was just discrimination. Our father just beat the Exclusion Act. He was twelve years old when he came over, as a coolie. Originally, the store was a purveyor to laundrymen—half the population here in the eighteen-nineties. There were supposed to be ten thousand laundries in the area. The laundrymen came in on Sundays, their one day off, for their supplies, including dried foods, soap, and Colgate toothpaste. We also shipped supplies to Chinese laundries around the country—buttons, laundry tickets, irons."

Lok B. Lee took over in 1894; he was chosen by the store's founders because he spoke English, his son said. He paid a thousand dollars to have his identification papers upgraded from coolie to merchant, and, with his higher status, he was exempt from the Exclusion Act—allowed to have a family and to travel to and from China. "My father's favorite story was that John D. Rockefeller taught him English," Peter Lee said. "About the time they were calling Rockefeller a robber baron, he came to Chinatown and taught Sunday school to five kids. My father was one of them. He was very ingenious. He was basically illiterate in Chinese, because he came here so young. He always carried a Bible and a New York *Times*. Two of the hardest things to practice your English on!"

American banks refused Chinese, so stores like Lee's acted as banks. "That's how they opened all these laundries—the stores lent money," Peter Lee explained. "This store helped Lees. Other stores helped other families. To open a laundry cost two thousand dollars. My father took no collateral. You told him what district in Canton you were from, and he'd lend you five hundred dollars at six per cent, exactly like the bank, and you'd get the rest from relatives. Laundrymen deposited with him, too, like a credit association. They only spent for their everyday needs. The rest my father would bank and, if they wanted, send it to their wives in China. It was a very lonely life for them. When they'd piled up a thousand or two thousand dollars, become rich men, they'd retire to China, because they had no wives here. We paid out two hundred and fifty thousand dollars over that counter." Lee pointed to an old wooden counter, over which mostly tickets to Atlantic City and entertainment events pass now. "We had just fifty thousand dollars in bad debt."



Showing me an old piece of cloth covered with metal campaign buttons and medals, Peter Lee said, "Here are my father's medals. The Chinese-American Alliance raised a million dollars for the First World War. My father headed the fund drive here. We're really talking about laundrymen donating their savings—it's amazing they could raise that much. And they weren't even citizens. This yellow-and-red button, 'Bowl of Rice Party—Call to Arms,' must be from the thirties, when Japan invaded China and the U.S. wasn't getting involved. Chiang Kai-shek was *the* man here. We raised several million dollars for the Guomindang, because that was the only party we knew. Sun Yat-sen started the Guomindang, you know, and he stayed at 10 Mott Street when he came to New York to raise funds for the 1911 Revolution. He went to all the Chinatowns—San Francisco, Honolulu. New York was then the smallest one, but we backed him up, and later we backed up Chiang Kai-shek, his successor.

"My father had two dreams: to send all of us to college, and to become an American citizen. He died a year before Chinese were granted citizenship. We were finally accepted, because the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, and the U.S. allied with Chiang Kai-shek. Washington let Chinese in because we were allies. One hundred and five a year! My father never gave up on America. He bought a cemetery plot here. 'Don't you send my bones back to China,' he said. 'This is my country.' "

But, Peter Lee added, his father pushed him out of Chinatown. "The only reason I'm back here is that my son and I forced our way into this store. I figured we had to protect our interests. See, my father said, 'Make your living outside.' People figured

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that their sons could make a better living with an American company—better pay and a pension, for example. That's why this is a first-generation community—the first families kept it that way. They were always getting people from the other side to run the businesses, and pushing their children out. The children wanted to go. They remembered the cold tenements, the hall toilets—all the bad things."

The Chinatown that Peter Lee returned to in the seventies had changed radically since the nineteen-forties. The racist immigration quotas had been lifted. The United States had diplomatic relations only with Taiwan, so immigration was largely from Taiwan and Hong Kong. Students who wanted to "drink Western ink" flowed in. Some of them, together with the sons and daughters of the laundrymen of the thirties and forties, formed the Asian-American movement. Young radicals saw the Vietnam War as racist, and were shocked that G.I.s couldn't distinguish politically between Vietcong and Vietnamese. Asian-studies courses, and writers like Maxine Hong Kingston, for the first time examined American history from the point of view of Asian-Americans. Many assimilated Chinese moved back to Chinatown, and organized Third World solidarity movements, storefront social-service and political-education programs, and food co-ops.

In New York, in 1969, some leftists took the name I Wor Kuen—after an anti-Western paramilitary group that was prominent during the Boxer Rebellion—and shook the community up. In Chinatown, the Communist flag had not been raised since the fifties, when the United States began an embargo of goods from the People's Republic. In his book "The New Chinatown," Peter Kwong explains how I Wor Kuen was the first to import movies from the People's Republic and sell Communist Party magazines in Chinatown after the embargo was lifted. The group's members agitated for the establishment of diplomatic relations with the People's Republic. They demonstrated against tourist buses, denouncing tourists for ogling Chinese as though they were animals in a zoo. They charged the conservative elders with exploiting Chinese, ignoring social problems, and being Uncle Toms.

All this rubbed off on Paul Lee. In the seventies, before he became an actor, he was a social worker who counselled gang kids and advocated establishing diplomatic relations with the People's Republic. Lee and his father have a typically Chinese, strained father-son relationship. New immigrants would consider Paul Lee a *juk-sheng* ("hollow as a bamboo pole")—one who betrayed Chinese culture. He cannot read or write Chinese, and embracing individualism inevitably brought him into conflict with his father. "We have an expression in China—a mountain cannot have two tigers," he said. "That tells the whole story. In Chinese culture, the old guys are revered when they get old. The modern Chinese aren't playing that, and the women aren't, either."

Paul Lee went on to explain, "Here it isn't asked if you've done enough for your community. I used to be on the board of a social-welfare agency, and people said, 'What? You're crazy.' It's asked if you've done enough for your family. My family's about ninety people—when you have taken care of your mother, your father, your wife's mother's father, your brothers, your sisters . . . The list goes on and on. If they come free of debts, they want me to buy them a house. As an American-born Chinese, I'd give them a one-time cash payment. I'd talk to my wife and determine the size of the payment. In my family's terms, I'm obligated. You're supposed to give freely and be happy. If I had a cousin on the other side getting married, I'd be supposed to raise her dowry. It's never O.K. to marry out of the Chinese family—don't let anyone tell you different.

"We used to be a little neighborhood. Chinatown is now an integral part of an international financial center—Hong Kong, Taiwan, Toronto. We may be small next to Japan, but we have a lot of big money moving around, and legitimate money. Chinese are into every field you can think of now. When I was a kid, I used to be pissed off that we were locked into math or science. I couldn't be in history or the arts or political science. Chinese want their children to be scholars or professionals. No one wanted me to be an actor. Gerald Tsai, the C.E.O. of Primerica—that's awesome. Our self-image today is much better. I used to be a little store on Mott Street. Now I can dream in other areas. I was a consultant on 'The Year of the Dragon,' and then M-G-M hired me to represent it. They put me up in the Beverly Wilshire, on Rodeo Drive. My customers couldn't care less about my film career. That's something I'm so proud of." Paul laughed, greatly amused.

"Hollywood stars could come here and be completely anonymous," he went on. "A vast, vast majority of Chinatown wouldn't know them. I bring the Chinese superstars here to perform in Atlantic City. For instance, Danny Chan, the singer. Roman Tam, the top performer in Hong Kong. Fifty dollars a head." Paul clapped his hands. "Our showtime is 1 A.M." He laughed again. "I get more for my tickets to these shows than Frank Sinatra gets. I'll tell you what this place is like. How many people do you know who would not want to work in a Woody Allen movie? Nobody in Chinatown has ever heard of Woody Allen. I had to get some extras for his last film, 'Alice,' and I asked a room full of a hundred people, 'Please do me a favor.' Zero. The film people were, like, 'Don't they know this is a Woody Allen film? They should be happy to be in it!' I said, 'If you want them to be happy, don't tell them it's a Woody Allen film, tell them it's a film for that nice little man over there with glasses.' "

—GWEN KINKEAD

(This is the first part of a two-part article.)

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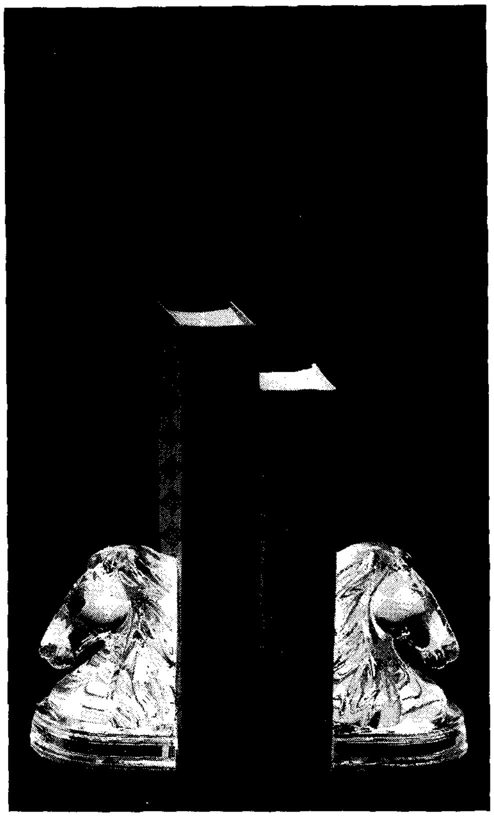

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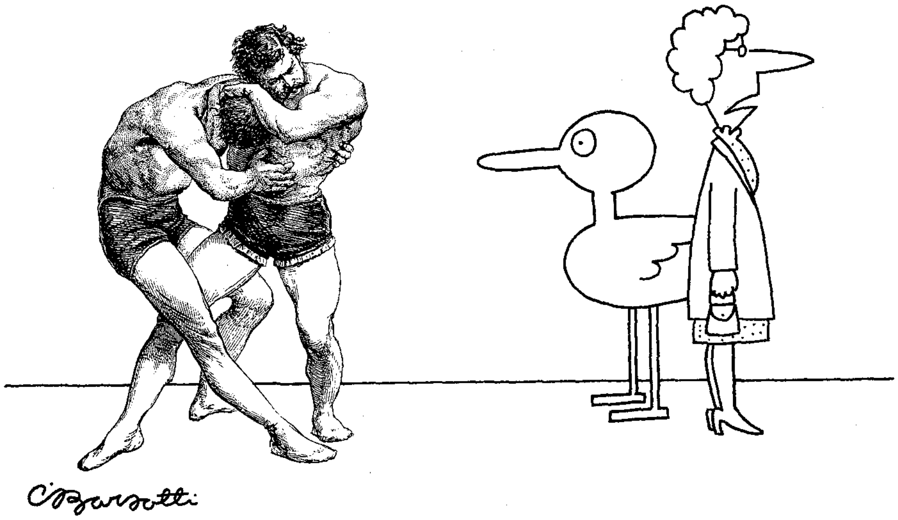
IN FASHION

The Eye of the Beholder

IN the video for George Michael's "Freedom," released last November, Michael himself is nowhere to be seen, but his voice carries us along as the camera cuts from one girl to the next in a glamorous relay, with five unofficial members of an international modelling cartel mouthing in succession the words to his latest hit song. Linda Evangelista sits huddled inside a big cowl-neck sweater, waiting for a kettle to boil; her hair, which started a trend when she cropped it nearly three years ago, is now platinum blond. Cindy Crawford, the Revlon girl, with her trademark mole above her lip, soaks in a bathtub. Tatjana Patitz, a voluptuous German blonde, with narrow, almond eyes, lies in bed, staring at the ceiling and smoking a cigarette. Naomi Campbell, a black soubrette with a penchant for wigs, and Christy Turlington, a radiant, pixie-faced ingénue, her full lower lip in a natural pout, complete the cast (along with a few forgettable men). They move through rooms that are very sparsely furnished, like a gang of beautiful girls squatting in an abandoned sorority house. These are the girls who all posed together for the cover of the January, 1990, issue of British *Vogue*—the faces for a new decade. Someday, we'll see a rerun of this video and think, That was the year of those girls—the way we look at old photographs and magazines and think, Those were the days when Earth shoes were all the rage, or That was the year of the Dorothy Hamill haircut.

Now that movie stars, baring their battered souls to Barbara Walters or writing memoirs of their stay at the Betty Ford Center, have succeeded in convincing us that they're no better than the rest of us, the glamour surrounding fashion models is greater than any Hollywood starlet's. Now that men and women who forty years ago could have blithely gone about their careers as sex symbols have taken to wearing horn-rimmed glasses and attending poetry readings and lobbying on behalf of the rain forest, fashion models seem to be among the few remaining guilt-free good-time girls. And now that actresses have grown increasingly determined to present themselves as real people wearing plain clothes, it's the models who look consistently stunning. For some time now, fashion designers have been celebrities in their own right, but it's just lately, with Gianni Versace coöpting the music business and Giorgio Armani the movie industry, that they and the models who surround them have begun not only to move in the same circles as rock stars and actors but to be seen as their equals.

There have been models who attained a kind of stardom in the past: Marion Morehouse in the twenties and thirties; Lisa Fonssagrives in the forties; Suzy Parker and Dovima in the fifties; Twiggy, Veruschka, and Jean Shrimpton in the sixties; Lauren Hutton, Cheryl Tiegs, and Christie Brinkley in the seventies. But it's only with the current generation that the most successful models have transcended fashion and become pop stars. On the runway, in the pages of magazines, on MTV, they exercise their fascination. With fashion in such a state of disarray, these girls define the moment we're living in as much as, if not more than, any designer. An outfit that's simple or classic, not particularly new, looks timely when it's worn by one of them. And they have what amounts to a virtual monopoly, with any one of them appearing in ads for competing houses. "You'd think that there weren't any other models working," a fashion publicist remarked recently, leafing through the pages of a magazine.



"Ignore them."

BACKSTAGE on the morning of the Comme des Garçons show, in the Cour Carrée of the Louvre, where the French ready-to-wear collections are bivouacked for eight days twice a year, the atmosphere is surprisingly serene. The models start arriving at the tent a little before seven—unusually early for a show scheduled to start at half past ten. They greet one another cordially, exchanging compliments on their latest magazine photographs, trading news about their bookings and their boyfriends. Seen in this context, Kristen McMenamy looks rather average: yet another girl who's five feet ten, with a long, narrow neck, like the stem of a flower; a small head; long arms and legs; large hands and feet; small breasts; no thighs. She makes her way to the tables set up along one wall, where seven hairdressers work side by side, combing gobs of gel through dampened hair with their fingers and shaping waves with aluminum clips. Five makeup artists, lined up opposite, dab on foundation and paint lips and fingernails an inky shade of purple. In the center of the room, stainless-steel rolling racks, one for each girl, are arranged in rows, each with a poster-board chart listing every outfit and its accessories. ARIANE, CORDULA, CHRISTY, YASMEEN, KRISTEN, HELENA, MARPESSA, the charts say, both in large letters and in Japanese characters—first names only. In modelling, as in classical ballet—another career in which success comes at an age when other people are still deciding what they want to be when they grow up—the women are called girls.

Rei Kawakubo, the Japanese designer behind the Comme des Garçons label, stands silently off to one side, surveying the racks, like a general inspecting her troops on the morning of a battle. Dressed entirely in black, with a black leather jacket over her shoulders, she seems both formidable and shy. Her employees move in a wide orbit around her, leaving her alone, out of what appears to be a mixture of awe and fear. She says nothing to the models; they say nothing to her. Kristen gives her a wide berth. At eight-thirty, Kawakubo calls a rehearsal, and the director, an apprehensive-looking Japanese man in a maroon shirt and a checked sports coat, with a pair of sunglasses hanging from a lanyard around his neck, calls the models into a huddle for a pep talk under one of several portable heaters hanging from the ceiling.

"We want to do something different," he explains. "Basically, you walk in the middle, you turn right or left—it's easy but something a little bit aggressive."

"Aggressive?" one of the girls asks.

"But we don't want it to shake hip and too much feminine. But could you try something new, future style?" The girls look bewildered. "Anyway, I know you are professionals," he barrels on. "You rest a little. I know you understand what I want to do. O.K.!" He claps his hands. "Let's go!"

"Future style," Ariane echoes uncertainly.

The members of the press department, the managers of Comme des Garçons boutiques all over the world, and forty-odd assistants and fitters imported for the occasion from Tokyo move out front to watch the rehearsal. From a chair in the third row on the left side of the runway, Kawakubo follows the sequence of outfits on a list, making notes as she watches. The girls, the aluminum clips still in their hair, travel the catwalk—sixty-five feet long, covered in silver lamé, and protected by a sheet of clear plastic—coming down the center and going back up again in two "lanes," one on either side. Kristen, who has not yet passed through the hands of the makeup artists, looks a little red around the eyes and nose. None of the models smile or pivot, as they do for designers like Valentino and Givenchy; Helena Christensen, the dark-haired Danish model, a relatively recent arrival who is rapidly closing in on the big stars, has modified her walk to make it a bit more flat-footed than usual. For the penultimate passage—a group of floating ball gowns, their skirts quilted and padded and painted like wedding kimonos with traditional Japanese motifs (a crane or cedar trees or Mt. Fuji) in red, gold, black, and white—the music switches from Euro rock to the "Blue Danube" waltz.

A notorious perfectionist, Kawakubo insists on at least one fitting and two rehearsals in the days leading up to her show; most other designers require one or two fittings and no rehearsals. At the end of the rehearsal, she gathers her assistants around her in a circle on the floor backstage and reviews her notes. The assistants get busy, making last-minute adjustments. The models change back into their own clothes for the time being—Kristen into a black cashmere cardigan sweater, vintage nineteen fifty-something, which she wears tied at the waist to expose a black lace-trimmed bra; pumpkin-colored stretch shorts; and two pairs of tights, black fishnet over black opaque. Helena asks Kristen where she got her bra. "J. C. Penney's," Kristen tells her.

Kristen sits on top of a table, her legs folded under her, waiting her turn in the makeup assembly line, and rehearsing dialogue from a dog-eared movie script in preparation for a screen test she has scheduled for later that afternoon. Bruno Nuytten, the French director who made "Camille Claudel," is considering her for his next movie, in the role of an American model in her mid-twenties living in Paris. Except that the character commits suicide at the end, Kristen says, the part is her all over. As she practices her lines aloud, one of the makeup artists, a curly-haired Frenchman, listens and corrects her pronunciation. She has lived in Paris for five years all told, but her command of the French language is still tentative, her pronunciation approximate. (She calls the *haute couture* the "hot couture.") "*Si tu te sens capable de porter tous les deuils*," she reads. The makeup artist corrects her on the word *deuils*. "DIE" she writes next to it in the script, and tries it again. "That's good?" she asks.

"*Ça va*," he replies.

The press attaché, standing nearby, tells her about Jean Seberg's accent in "Breathless," and she seems reassured.

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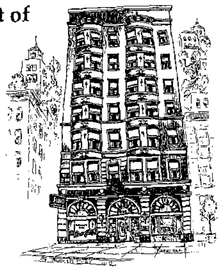
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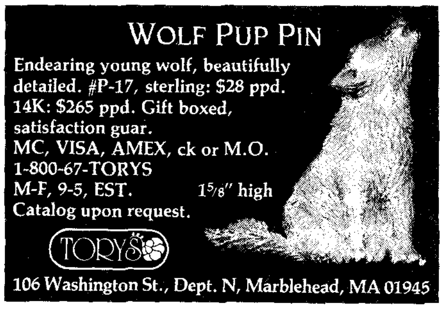
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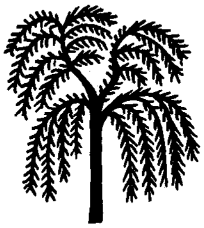
sweatshirt, with a sweater knotted around her waist, silences Kristen long enough to trace the outline of her lips with a brown pencil, then says, "Open."

Kristen describes her face as a blank, her features as plain, without definition, when she's wearing no makeup—an assessment that is, to be honest, fairly accurate. Her skin is astonishingly white, like a painter's canvas; her eyebrows are rather vague; her eyes are a pale quartz blue but not especially large or striking; her mouth is quite wide, with two possible lip lines—one the boundary of her lips' natural color, the other the outer edge of their contour. "Makeup artists love my face, because they can draw on it," she says. The woman in the gray sweatshirt applies a patch of deep-purple lipstick to the back of her left hand, which she uses as a palette, and, cradling Kristen's jaw to steady it, transfers the color to Kristen's lips with a brush. "Oh, you got Wet 'n' Wild!" Kristen says, recognizing the tube. "Ninety-nine cents at Woolworth's! Looks like black, but it's a little plum. It's dry, but . . ."



"All dark colors are very drying," the makeup artist says, shrugging. She paints Kristen's nails with a coat of black polish, followed by one of red. "So, you are learning French now?" she asks.

"*Un peu*," Kristen answers, making little waving motions with her hands to dry her nails.

The girls stare off into space as the makeup artists work on their faces. At a table in one corner, a Japanese man in a shirt and tie steams a gray silk shantung jacket trimmed with transparent vinyl; another man, with a tape measure draped around his neck, sits bent over a long red vinyl skirt, stitching up the slit at the back.

The woman who books the models for both the women's and the men's shows for Comme des Garçons tells me, as we stand off to one side, surveying the action, that the male models are a completely different breed. For them, modelling is a job, she explains—it's something they do for the money. And the girls? I ask. For the girls, she says, it's *them*—the way they look is who they are. (Later in the day, during one of the early passages in Yohji Yamamoto's show, the photographers—ready to riot over the places they've been assigned—suddenly break into a raucous chorus of boos and hissing. Ariane, who was on the runway when the commotion started, comes running to her rack, which is next to Kristen's, in tears. Sobbing, she changes into her next outfit. The models nearby gather around her, trying to comfort her. "Ariane," Kristen insists, "it isn't *you!*")

At ten-ten, six seamstresses crouch around one of the ball gowns, spread out on brown paper on the floor—three of them guiding the fabric into place, the three others sewing furiously. Most of the models are doing the things that people do when they have time on their hands: listening to a Walkman, rereading a letter, copying names and telephone numbers from torn scraps of the paper tablecloth at last night's bistro dinner into an address book. No one is reading a newspaper. But then there is no real incentive for most of these girls to take an interest in the outside world. A reporter spending a week in the *cabine* comes reluctantly to the conclusion that the cliché about models being superficial is not without some basis.

Kristen watches Yasmeen, a Canadian model, applying eyeshadow and brow pencil from a kit of her own, in defiance of the makeup artists' specifications. "The tramp!" she mutters, with an indignation that is only partly feigned. In fact, many of the girls make a practice of adapting the designer's vision to the way they prefer to see themselves. Kristen and two other models who have left their faces exactly as the makeup artists did them complain that alongside these girls who have added extra makeup to emphasize their eyes they're going to look dead on the runway. "It's not fair to the designer, it's not fair to the makeup artist," Kristen says, shaking her head.

At ten-thirty, Kawakubo and six of her assistants are wrapping a length of indigo tulle around a blond model, who stands rooted, like a maypole, as they bustle around her. Through the walls comes music from Daniel Hechter's show, going on in the tent next door: "You're sixteen, you're beautiful, and you're mine!"

"Wow," Kristen says. "They're really hip over there."

"O.K., excuse me, girls!" the director calls out. "Attention, *s'il vous plaît!* Just two or three things. Most are very good. I need more power—more powerful. So I change some part of the music. And one thing: Don't open your mouth. I mean, this makeup, when you open your mouth it looks awful. So be careful." He claps his hands. "O.K.! Thank you for your coöperation."

At ten-fifty, one of the fitters is polishing a black vinyl duckbill cap with a tissue; a waiter in a white apron is standing at a table, arranging plastic cups on a tray. Kristen fidgets. "I thought I could study my script, but I can't," she says. At eleven, the fitters, most of them Japanese students, are positioned beside the racks, holding stockings already gathered and waiting to be stepped into. "Stand by," the director calls. The models go to their racks to dress. Kristen climbs into a pair of pale sheer pantyhose followed by black opaque tights; a fitter holds a shoehorn as she slides into square-toed black flats. Her first outfit is a long black gabardine skirt overlaid in front with a clear vinyl panel. The fitter sprays an anti-static aerosol up the inside of her skirt. "We're all going to be sterile," Kristen laments. A hairdresser makes the rounds, removing clips.

A German model has got her houndstooth dress on wrong. "No? *Mein Gott!*" she cries. Five Japanese women come to her rescue, twisting the top sections, pulling one arm through. Ariane wonders aloud whether the dress she's wearing, a stretchy black-and-white lumberjack-plaid tube, makes her hips look wider. A champagne cork pops, and the tray of plastic cups is passed. "Good luck, everyone!" Kristen calls out. "Be strong, and no open mouths! *Salute!*"

The girls are herded into a line that begins in the wings and trails down the stairs leading to the *cabine*. Cordula smokes a cigarette. Most stand impassively, as if they were queued up at a cash machine. The music starts; the line advances. Kawakubo is stationed at the top step, arranging the way the clothes fall before each model goes onstage. The soundtrack, overhauled since the rehearsal, is now mostly acid rock. Between forays down the runway and back, Kristen rushes from the exit to her rack; steps out of her clothes, leaving them in puddles on the floor for the fitters to pick up later; and, putting a white silk pillow slip over her head, so as not to leave any makeup smudges on the clothes, wriggles into her next outfit. She steps into black flat-heeled go-go boots; the fitter kneels behind her and zips them up the back. When a silver lamé dress gets stuck on her head, she squeals in panic. One model, already dressed and with time to kill in her gabardine suit for the finale, stands off to one side eating a brioche. In a black shirt with red vinyl sleeves, Kristen watches the girls wearing ball gowns take their places. "Oh, why couldn't I have had a ball gown?" she wails, to no one in particular. The "Blue Danube" waltz begins. "Well," she reasons, "I do have a ball gown at Yohji Yamamoto." She pauses, still thinking, looking not quite consoled. "It's wood," she explains. For Yamamoto's Constructivist finale, she has been assigned a dress of wooden slats which fastens with nuts and bolts.

There is applause backstage as the last group, a series of suits, is sent out. Kawakubo is gently prodded onto the runway for a hasty, modest half bow. Kristen returns, shedding her outfit. "Total success," she announces, climbing into her own clothes for the frantic dash to the tent next door, where Angelo Tarlazzi's show is scheduled to start in twenty minutes.

In an article in the March issue of French *Vogue*, Gérard Miller, a psychoanalyst and author sent by the magazine's editors to cover the spring haute-couture collections, writes of the sexual standoff between the models and the photographers which occurs in fashion shows: there is, he claims, no more terrifying representation of woman than these women—the purer the face, the more streamlined the body, the more one discovers the threat that every woman engenders in the unconscious mind. Inaccessible women, he calls them, who transform these impotent men, hunched over their cameras, into pillars of salt: "*La beauté absolue et l'horreur de la castration!*" But where do these women come from, he wonders, and who made them?

Kristen McMenamy comes from Easton, Pennsylvania, where, as a teenager, she pored over fashion magazines, studying the girls pictured in them, looking into their faces, as if in their expressions she might find some hidden message addressed to her—some words of encouragement, some advice about what to do or where to go. Mostly, she sat around wishing that she looked like Cindy Boucher, a girl who went to her high school—a blond cheerleader with the perfect body, perfect teeth, perfect smile. "She never talked to me," McMenamy recalls.

All the girls in her neighborhood had the same haircut. McMenamy was as tall at thirteen as she is now; her classmates nicknamed her Skeleton. She would lighten her hair, lie out in the sun for hours, burning her fair skin, and spend all her money on the makeup featured in the magazines she studied. "There was a list of things you were supposed to be: blond, tan, pretty," she recalls. "I'd like to know who made that list." McMenamy's most vivid memories of her years at Notre Dame High School are of eating lunch alone in the cafeteria, because she had no friends. "I forget everyone's name—that's how bad my childhood was," she says. "I've blocked it out." She didn't save her yearbook or buy a class ring, because she was "so ashamed" of that chapter in her life. Not only was she never asked for a date, she was laughed at for being freckled and red-haired. So it seems some roundabout sort of justice that a few years back she caused a minor sensation by appearing on French television in a commercial for George Killian beer, an Irish red ale, or *bière rousse*, and delivering one of those lines that, for no good reason, become etched in the popular memory: "*Je suis rousse, et alors?*"

McMenamy was a straight-A student until, at sixteen, she started hanging out in local night clubs. She sent some pictures to *Cosmopolitan's* cover-girl contest. The winner was a blonde from California. McMenamy combed the list of semifinalists for her name: not there. In Allentown, she went to modelling school. In three weeks, for five hundred dollars, she was taught how to smile, how to walk, how to put her hands on her hips. None of her teachers believed she had a future. "I was even a reject there," she says. When she was seventeen, she went to New York to make the rounds of the big agencies with her portfolio—an album of party snapshots and out-of-focus studio pictures taken by local wedding photographers. Together with a friend, who had come along for moral support, she went from Wilhelmina to Zoli and on to Elite, and, finally, to Ford, growing more and

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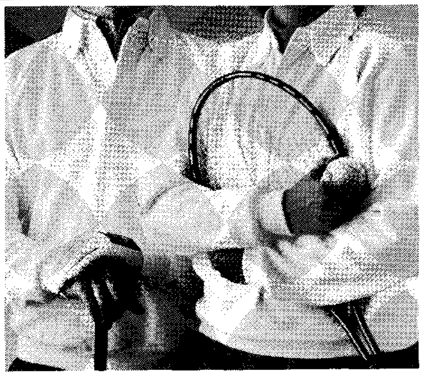

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more discouraged. At the end of the day, Eileen Ford herself came out to look at her book. "I wanted her to be my savior," McMenamy says. Ford suggested that she go back to Easton, go to college, get married, have a family, and forget about modelling. She also told Kristen's friend, who had no interest in such a career, that she had potential. Kristen cried the whole bus ride home.

About a year and a half later, she got a call from the head of a small agency called Legends, in New York, who had seen the pictures she'd submitted to *Cosmopolitan.* For the first time, she went to the appointment wearing no makeup, as she'd always been instructed to do. The agent made her no promises but took her on, and sent her straight to a hair colorist, who turned her from a bleached blonde back into a redhead. She was, by her own description, overweight, pigeon-toed, and shy, with her hair in her face. No bookings followed, but she did a lot of test photographs; after a few months, the agency sent her to Paris on a one-way ticket and told her to get some tear sheets—a common strategy for models who are just starting out and don't fit the glorified-girl-next-door description of beauty which still prevails in America. In Europe, the notions of what's attractive aren't so narrow. The model who returns to New York, which is where the money is, on the strength of a reputation abroad often finds that clients who weren't willing to take a chance on someone so unconventional before—or perhaps weren't able to see her appeal—suddenly come around.

In Paris, after a year of demoralizing go-sees for yogurt ads, McMenamy at last came to the attention of Peter Lindbergh, a much admired German fashion photographer, who works in a dramatic, darkly original style, and it was he who saw in her something that the others had overlooked and brought it out into broad daylight. From then on, she was overwhelmed with work. By the time she made the decision to come back to New York, three years ago, she was known within the industry as one of the most successful models in Europe.

But in New York her career began to falter. It was, she says, a matter of the way she was used. "I would be booked for sportswear catalogues and put in a pink jumpsuit," she recalls. Tessa Jowers, the director of model management at Elite, which now represents McMenamy in New York, says that to a large extent it's the nature of the work in America. A lot of the bookings here are for ads for some department store's Mother's Day sale or for Cover Girl or Maybelline or J. Crew—"the kinds of things that are appealing to white-bread America, the one-hundred-per-cent-cotton kind of crowd," she explains. "A lot of fashion here seems to be aimed at the masses. People worry about pleasing Middle America—you've got to sell to those people to stay in business. Whereas in Paris they'll bank everything on the artistic value, and then, by doing that, they make something chic and it sells."

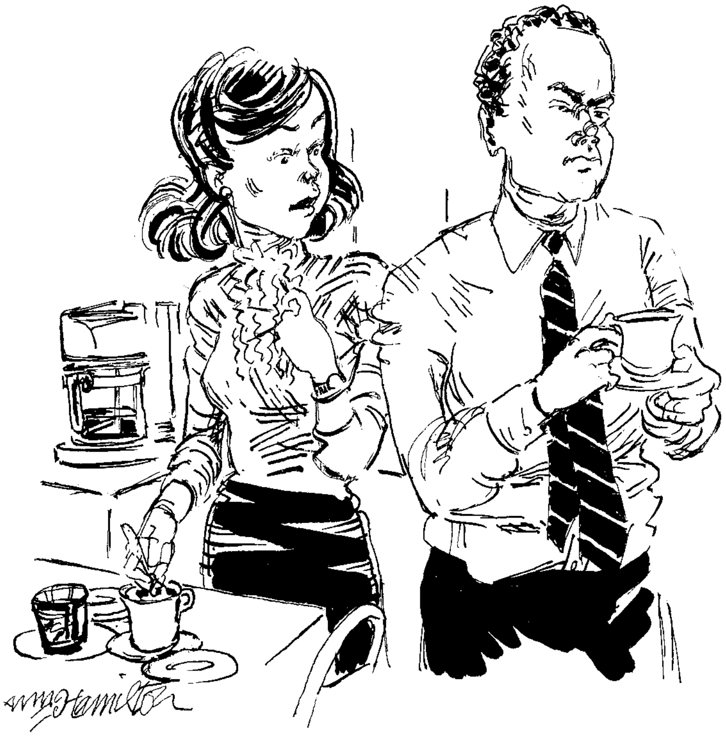
McMenamy admits to being choosy about the jobs she accepted. "I wouldn't fly to Chicago to do a sweater for Macy's," she says.

Jowers thinks she was justified. "There are some girls who are only going to go so far, and they should take whatever comes along and get what they can out of it," she says. "But Kristen is going for a high-profile, top-model career—editorial with the top photographers, advertising under contract to a designer or a fragrance—and it's by holding out for the important jobs in periods when she wasn't busy that she has got to this level."

After two years in New York, McMenamy says, she felt as if she were back in high school, trying to conform. In the spring of last year, she packed her bags and returned to Paris, and has been there ever since. The work that comes her way there is more interesting, she says, and she's appreciated for her idiosyncrasies. She is still choosy. She routinely refuses to go to Germany to do catalogues, though they pay very well. "I don't think about the money I'm making," she insists. In fact, she says, she would do the jobs she loves for practically nothing. When she works with a photographer like Peter Lindbergh, for instance, she wants every picture "to make history." On the days when she knows she hasn't worked well, she says, she feels like giving the money back. She is not, Lindbergh agrees, a commercial model. "She has always that artistic side, which is very strong," he explains. "You can put her nowhere and say 'Do something,' and you get the most incredible pictures."

Martine Sitbon, the designer, and Marc Ascoli, the art director responsible for both the line Sitbon designs under her own name and the line she designs for Chloé, call themselves members of Kristen McMenamy's fan club. They tell the story of the time last season when she came for a preliminary fitting for the benefit of the executives at Chloé. Not having been forewarned that their tastes ran to the more conventional, she acted out what Ascoli calls "*une vision de la couture complètement phantasmagorique, extraterrestre*"—advancing, striking a haughty pose, giving the president a pointed look, retreating, every movement at a pace that was unbelievably, inhumanly slow. She heard "Chloé," Ascoli explains, and thought "Couture!" The executives, fascinated and appalled, could not be persuaded to hire her for the show. This season, Ascoli and Sitbon advised McMenamy to present herself in a manner that was a little more "standard," and there was no problem. Even so, what's "standard" for McMenamy would be quirky for anyone else. At her most conventional, she has the unmistakable air of an oddball. This is not an impression created by her physical proportions or by the geometry of her features. Unlike the models Jean-Paul Gaultier promotes—girls who look peculiar but carry themselves with all the grace and poise of a legendary beauty—McMenamy looks lovely, if not quite usual; her eccentricities spring from something inside, which occasionally contorts her features and makes her movements slightly convoluted.

"Personality" is the word that comes up time and again when people talk about McMenamy. Lindbergh says it's what he looks for in a model and what he saw in her. "First, personality. And then what people call 'beauty,' but I think you can't detach one from the other," he explains. "When you see her face, it's like the interior is outside. Many of the other girls, they have more of a façade, but she looks the way she is inside—the inside is on the face, and it's very touching. That's what I think is beautiful. Otherwise, what could be beautiful, I have no idea. It's not a question of no wrinkles, or something like that."



"It's as though everything nice about you had been just some kind of introductory offer."

EVERY few years or so, a model or a fashion-magazine editor or somebody else in a position to talk about what women look like issues a statement to the effect that when it comes to our standards of beauty we're making progress. Mostly, such remarks serve as the occasion for us to congratulate not the women we find beautiful but ourselves—for being so highly evolved, so humane and sophisticated and open-minded, that we're able to recognize their beauty. Cindy Crawford has been known to flatter her constituency with the remark that only fifteen or twenty years ago a girl like her could not have had a successful career as a model without first having her mole removed—the most recent installment of the agitprop that in the seventies seized on the space between Lauren Hutton's front teeth as a sign of how far the world had come. The desire to think that human nature is getting better, that we're more enlightened than the people who came before us, is not new, nor is it confined to our perceptions of fashion, though fashion tends to play on it. Lois W. Banner, in her book "American Beauty," a social history of American ideals of beauty, recapitulates the theories of various nineteenth-century optimists who hypothesized that America was becoming "an amalgamation of racial types," and that out of that mixture would come "a higher kind of beauty"; similarly, she notes, certain Darwinians were convinced that the human race would become progressively more beautiful, since beautiful men and women chose each other as mates and passed their beauty on to their children, "while ugly people, unchosen, had no progeny." We see the folly of ideas like these quite clearly, and find the notion that people should be getting better-looking with each successive generation quaint and amusing. The sorts of looks that people in the nineteenth century considered ravishing (Lillian Russell's, Lillie Langtry's) for the most part leave us indifferent today. That our taste in faces and bodies changes from one era to the next is clear; that it changes for the better, however, is not. Still, we pride ourselves on being able to appreciate beauty that a hundred years ago would have gone unremarked, as if we were right and the people back then were wrong.

Our notions of what's beautiful are still fairly narrow, particularly in America, where generations of immigrants eager to fit in aspired to a homogenized ideal, without prominent features of the sort that could be construed as "ethnic," or lower-class. The reversal in fashion which came about in the sixties, with new ideas being launched in what the ancien-régime haute-couture houses grandly referred to as "the street," revised our standards of beauty as well. The aristocrat, which had been the predominant type, was joined by two others: the moppet and the earth mother.

It is tempting to view Kristen McMenamy as the harbinger of a new era, or a new set of standards, but—for the time being, at least—she seems more an exception to the rule. The path of her career has been uphill; her success is within limits that don't seem to apply to the big stars. "I'm a cult model," she explains. I ask her if the stardom that girls like Evangelista and Turlington and Campbell have attained is within her reach. "No, never," she replies. Why not? What do they have that she doesn't? "Natural beauty." McMenamy says that she always longed to be the kind of girl who wakes up in the morning looking beautiful, and that she has finally got around to accepting the fact that she's not. Even Tessa Jowers acknowledges that the so-called natural beauty isn't McMenamy's type. "You don't want to see Kristen in her bathrobe," she says. "You want to see her in a beaded miniskirt."

Marc Ascoli says that there are certain "divas" on the runway who are truly beautiful, incommensurably beautiful—it is, he remarks, almost a kind of magic to be as beautiful as that—and they also have personality, but they don't push it, because it's enough to be beautiful. He calls McMenamy a model with the ability to please or disturb—even, he says, to embarrass, to inspire in her audience anxiety that at the slightest mishap she might go to pieces. (Indeed, when at Gaultier's show this season McMenamy slipped on the synthetic-ice floor—laid for the benefit of skaters who were part of the entertainment—and nearly fell, there was a heart-stopping moment of panic which, it occurred to me, wouldn't have been nearly so acute if Evangelista or Turlington, who carry themselves with such aplomb, had stumbled.) It is this bizarre, slightly precarious quality that comes across on the runway and in photographs—that comes crashing through high fashion's decorum and veneer—and Ascoli says that because of this quality McMenamy is in fact more important than the superstar models, "*les grandes poupées belles, avec la beauté impeccable, plastique.*" McMenamy is, in his words, "*étrangement belle.*" There are, he acknowledges, people who even find her ugly.

"Yes, I think she's beautiful," David Seidner, who photographed her for Claude Montana's current ad campaign, says. "But it's certainly not a classic beauty—it's a kind of awkward, esoteric beauty. And also very contemporary. I don't think she looks like a beauty from another time. She has a kind of decadent look about her, because of the color of her hair and the color of her eyes and the way her mouth scowls slightly." He calls her a cross between Lucille Ball and Sandra Bernhard.

I asked a makeup artist who has worked with McMenamy if he thought she was beautiful.

"What is beautiful?" he replied rhetorically.

I asked him if he thought Christy Turlington was beautiful.

"Yes," he said.

THE day after the Comme des Garçons show, McMenamy is at her boyfriend's house, a whitewashed villa surrounded by a lawn and high walls in Paris's Sixteenth Arrondissement, for a shooting for the French edition of *Glamour*. The photographer is Manuela Pavesi, a fashion editor for Italian *Vogue* who has recently taken the camera into her own hands. Since the story is about McMenamy's distinctive sense of style, Kristen is wearing clothes from her own wardrobe: a burnt-orange acrylic bodysuit, black fishnet tights, and—a souvenir of the last Chanel haute-couture collection—black satin high-heeled shoes with bows at the instep. Her hair, shoulder-length, has been teased and combed over a fall; the makeup artist has not stinted on the eyeshadow. McMenamy sits on the floor as Pavesi, standing on a chair, registers her approval by clicking the shutter. Changing position, McMenamy moves her legs, establishing a rhythm.

She moves. The shutter whirrs. Move. Whirr. Move. Whirr, whirr, whirr. Move. Silence. She moves again. Whirr.

Back and forth, McMenamy and Pavesi carry on this wordless conversation. Occasionally, Pavesi will interrupt. "I prefer—" she begins.

"You like it the other way?" McMenamy asks, resuming an earlier pose.

"That's great," Pavesi says, and then the words subside and the exchange between McMenamy and the camera resumes. The longer you look at McMenamy, Pavesi says, the more interesting she becomes. "She has this ability to be very concentrated, but in a natural way—a way of being naïve and sophisticated together," she explains. "She's like an actress to me." Pavesi says she has watched McMenamy work with other photographers, "sometimes not very important photographers—and she always made the picture look good."

For the next shot, McMenamy pulls her bodysuit down over her seat, so that the sleeves are hanging, and knots a black cashmere cardigan over her black lace bra. The crew moves to the terrace. McMenamy leans against a wall lit by the late-afternoon sun. Pavesi positions herself about ten feet away, and stations her assistant in between, to hold down the fronds of a potted palm, which is too heavy to move, so that they don't jut into the bottom of the picture. McMenamy folds her arms in front of her waist; Pavesi responds with the camera. "What happens now if you are trying to hold the sweater, almost to keep it closed with your hands?" she asks. "Is a Marilyn Monroe shot." McMenamy tries it. "That's nice," Pavesi says. Whirr, whirr. McMenamy makes small adjustments in the position of her jaw. She looks deep into the camera and, changing the message in her eyes, runs through a series of expressions: dreamy, provocative, direct, accusatory, questioning. Is this the way you want me to look? she seems to be asking. She moves her lips, pursing them almost imperceptibly. "I really like it now because you are so vulnerable, you know?" Pavesi says. "And it's really you." The light is nearly gone. McMenamy lowers her eyes, then quickly looks up into the camera again. "That's great, Kristen," Pavesi says. "Thank you."

Taxis are called, and McMenamy takes hers directly to a photographer's studio, near République, where Helmut Lang, the Austrian designer, is fitting his collection, scheduled for presentation the following afternoon. He and Michèle Montagne, who organizes his show, greet McMenamy warmly. "What do you want to wear?" he asks her.

"The sexy things," she replies.

The three of them reminisce about Lang's show in Japan. "Not even *Tokyo*," McMenamy complains, rolling her eyes.

"Kobe," Montagne explains.

"We're on a plane for eleven hours," McMenamy continues, "then spend three hours on a train, and then we get to this place where you couldn't even shop."

McMenamy tries on her first outfit, a perforated tunic in cocoa-brown synthetic suède over a gold knit minidress, with brown suède boots; an assistant takes a Polaroid of her in it. She changes into a dress like a giant pom-pom, covered with long brown fabric fringe, and walks the length of the studio for Lang, parting the fringe at her stomach to reveal a plain sheath underneath. He tells her not to do that, to leave what's underneath a mystery, and trims the top layer so that the shape isn't quite so bushy. Next, she tries on a sheer silver organza shift with angel wings outlined in silver sequins on the back. "We try something under it," he tells her. "If it would be less nude, it would be greater."

"Yeah, really," Kristen says. "What happened to the mystery?"

"I think for us she is bringing something really special to the clothes—a kind of sickness," Montagne says. "But a nice sickness. If you have a quite elegant outfit and you put it on a classical, elegant girl, it becomes really boring, somehow, but if you put it on Kristen it becomes modern. Plus, we like her. We have really a kind of family. We are not rethinking our casting every season. Sometimes the agency calls and says 'This girl put on weight,' or 'This girl cut the hair,' or 'This girl is pregnant.' We say, 'Well, we don't care.' Normally, when we like somebody we like them for what they are."

THE fashion-show-as-theatrical-production, which we now take for granted, is in fact a fairly recent development. Before the ready-to-wear raised the stakes—back in the days when fashion's precincts were no bigger than the salons of the haute couture—new collections were presented in the houses themselves, with no music and, often, no bravado. Each model carried a card displaying the number of the outfit; the audience was seated on narrow gilt chairs, two or three rows deep. A veteran fashion editor recalls that when she arrived in Paris in the late forties the models at most houses were an assortment of body types—some short, some tall. At that time, fashion still considered itself a service industry: designers conceived their collections for different kinds of women, and the clothes were presented on the body types for which they were conceived. At the show, a short, small-boned client would pay special attention to the outfits worn by the models who were short and small-

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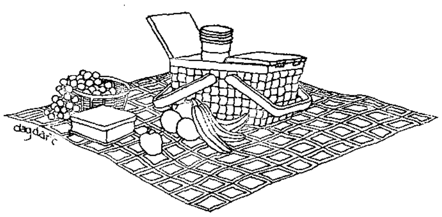
boned: those were the ones that would suit her best. It wasn't until sometime in the seventies that the current standard came to be the rule, and the tall girls prevailed. Not surprisingly, the change came at the time when fashion shows were moving out of the salon and into larger arenas—a convention center in Milan, hotel ballrooms in New York, the tents in Paris. Seen from these longer distances, the tall girls commanded the stage. Today, most runway models start at a hundred and seventy-eight centimetres, or five feet ten, and the manner in which the shows are presented has come to influence the design of the clothes. Martine Sitbon concedes that from time to time she scraps an idea because it's not something that would look good worn by a tall girl on the runway. Only Sybilla and Romeo Gigli defy the norm, setting a hundred and seventy-eight centimetres as a maximum. Gigli says that on a taller girl the proportions of the jackets he designs get distorted.

It was the Japanese—Rei Kawakubo, Yohji Yamamoto—who first booked photography models for their runway shows, when they brought their collections to Paris in the early eighties. Until then, there had been runway models, girls trained to parade the clothes, who had perfect bodies but not necessarily beautiful faces, and photography models, beautiful girls who, in the language of the business, "didn't know how to walk." Soon the models who dominated the pages of fashion magazines took over the runways as well, and now girls like Evangelista and Turlington seem to be everywhere, conferring their glamour on the collections of the major-league and the would-be-major-league designers so liberally that a big show without them by this time looks a little second-rate, as if the house couldn't afford them.

The lights go down, the music starts, and the excitement sets in: something is about to happen. But, for all the showmanship, the choreography, and the special effects, the experience inevitably feels empty. This is not a ballet or an opera or a play. What we see is not a meditation on the nature of human experience but a fantasy that is sometimes hard to decipher. Instead of being transported to some imaginary setting, outside time, we enter a world in which the here and now is made to seem more urgent than ever. Instead of the technique required to present the choreographer's or the composer's or the playwright's intentions, we get the technique required to present the designer's. Mostly, this consists of walking. Most people, until they've seen a fashion show, never realize that walking could be so complicated. Whether to step with the toes first or with the heel, how to put one foot directly in front of the other, as on a tightrope, so that the hips sway more than usual from side to side, what to do with the arms—these are the technical questions that models confront in the course of their work, and though their "roles" in most cases consist of nothing more than navigating the runway, there's no denying that the way they walk amounts to a performance.

At Jil Sander's show in Milan this season, a burst of applause greets Linda Evangelista's every entrance. Cool, self-possessed, chin down, eyes level, her platinum hair like some Hollywood movie star's halo in a portrait by George Hurrell, she steps out onto the runway as if she owned it, swinging one leg around the other. This season, there seems to be something new in her gaze, something bored or vaguely hostile. "Lin-da! Lin-da!" the photographers call after her as she pivots at the end of the runway and begins the journey upstage. She turns, not immediately but a few seconds later, to let them know that she has thought it over and decided to turn, that she's honoring their request this time but doesn't do everything they ask.

Helena Christensen walks with a rolling, seamless gait, her hips twisting slightly; she gives the photographers a lingering look over her shoulder as she turns. Gisèle, a short-haired Brazilian model with a prominent nose, adjusts her back heel slightly inward with every step forward. The photographers call her name; she smiles in reply. But their favorite by far is Marpessa, with her foxy stride. At the end of the runway she poses—arms akimbo, hips jutting way out to one side, torso at an angle—and basks in their hungry attention.



There is Naomi Campbell's giddy half trot, as if she were ready to dance and were obliged to walk instead, with the sort of sexy syncopation that Tennessee Ernie Ford used to call "a hitch in her git-along." There is Yasmin LeBon's cautious advance, a worried look on her face until she reaches the end of the runway, where her brow clears and she breaks into a small, wry smile, as if to let us know that she is above these clothes she's wearing and this job she's doing. There is Christy Turlington's indolent glide, her arms quiet. Claudia Schiffer, the Brigitte Bardot look-alike with a slight case of piano legs, stumps down the runway—appallingly clumsy. Kirsten Owen, a Canadian girl with short-cropped blond hair, makes her way gravely, chin level, shoulders pinned back, eyes straight forward or down, with a little bounce at the bottom of each step, as if she were sinking into the spongy turf of a putting green after a rainstorm.

In the midst of this company comes McMenamy, with her jangly gait, energetically awkward, almost goony at times but touching somehow—her arms swinging in a rhythm not quite synchronized with her legs, her legs frisky and not quite under control, as if they might run off with her at any moment. The impression she leaves is one of knees and elbows. She travels the route down the runway and back with an air of preoccupation, as if her mind were at work on a difficult problem or were constructing some elaborate fantasy from which she can't afford to be distracted. Gérard Miller, the psychoanalyst who was French *Vogue's* emissary to the haute couture, describes the mannequins' attitude as *au-delà*—their attention is focussed elsewhere, somewhere beyond the room where the show is taking place. They do not play to the audience. Neither does McMenamy. Her manner is equally remote, but, unlike the rest of the girls, who seem to have gone outside themselves as a means of transcending the scrutinizing stares, she seems to have travelled inward, where nobody can follow her.

BEHIND the scenes at Chanel, the supernumeraries are all wearing Chanel jackets and lots of jewelry. One of the hairdressers wears a printed silk Chanel vest over a white T-shirt.

Even the reporters—and the *cabine* is crawling with them, all scrounging for some human-interest detail that will make their stories come poignantly to life—are turned out in what looks to be all the Chanel they could muster. Some have assembled entire outfits, head to toe; others sport a token pair of earrings or a quilted leather bag, worn as a badge, in tribute to, or perhaps as a subtle means of ingratiating themselves with, Karl Lagerfeld, the line's designer.

Yasmin LeBon, who is English and is married to Simon LeBon, the lead singer of Duran Duran, has reported for work this morning with her baby daughter in a carriage. As the TV crews swarm around LeBon, who is sitting still for one of the makeup artists while her daughter plays with a blusher brush, and Evangelista, who is wearing a pink tweed Chanel jacket and jeans, McMenamy tells one of the hairdressers about her screen test. It went well, she says. The director has decided to use subtitles—in French—during her French speeches.

Lagerfeld, sporting his signature ponytail and sunglasses, is sipping a Diet Coke with ice and answering one reporter's questions as others crowd around, waiting their turn. He interrupts the interview to get a fan, which he opens and flicks as he talks. A blond American woman with a TV crew in tow asks him about hemlines. He tells her that any horizontal line cuts a woman, and that he prefers to think vertically, to concentrate on the long, tight line of the arms and legs.

"Some people would say that's a cop-out," she replies. "Where do you see hemlines now, Karl Lagerfeld?"

"I don't see the hemlines anymore," he insists, evidently impatient with her line of questioning.

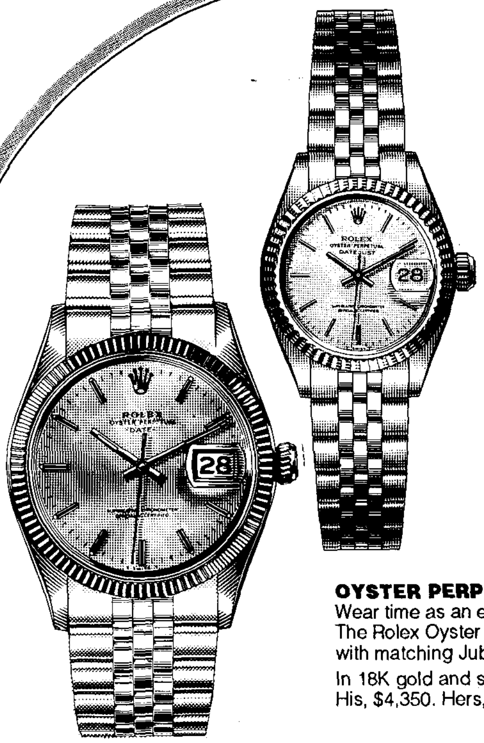
"You know," she persists, "these American women are *fixated* on hemlines."

He changes the subject, and talks about makeup.

On the outer fringe of the group of journalists clustered around Lagerfeld are two reporters trading information. One has just finished interviewing Christy Turlington. "She's twenty-two, she's engaged, and she's quit smoking," she tells the other.

The blonde interviewing Lagerfeld fires her last question: "Have you gone too funky this time, funky Karl?"

Gilles Dufour, Lagerfeld's right hand



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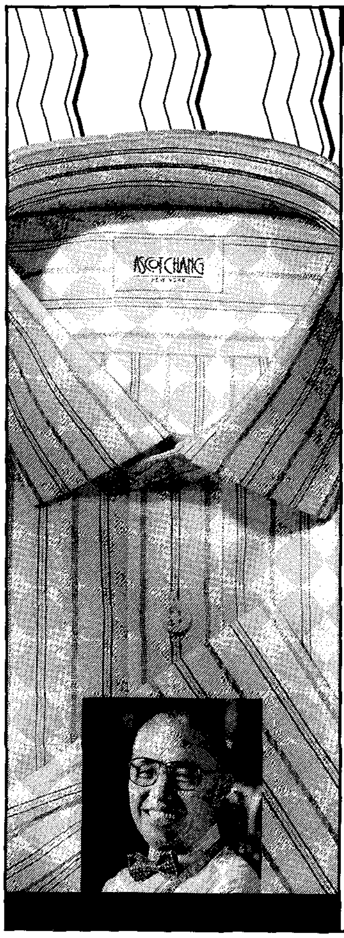

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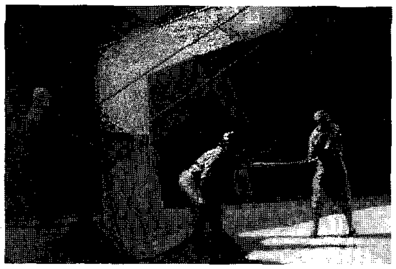

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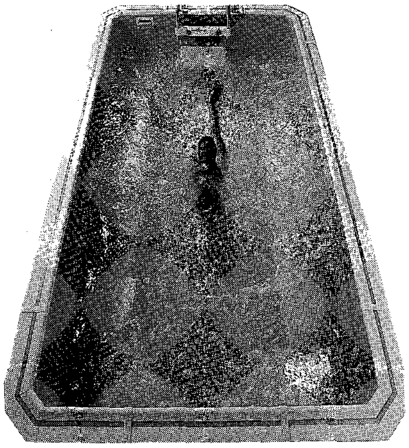

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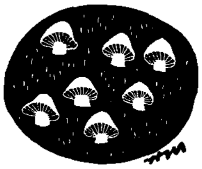
at Chanel, says that McMenamy, who modelled for the pictures in this season's press kit, has "a fantastic way of posing for photographs, a new way of acting with her hands, her face, her legs." He goes on to say, "Every two or three years, there's a new person to come along, and she's the new girl now. We go in her direction."

Lagerfeld calls her "a chameleon, an actress." She is not, he says, "a robo-model." He chose her not only for Chanel but for the publicity photographs for the line he designs under his own name and for the Fendi collection, which he also designs, because, he explains, she's the only model who could look so different, who could give each line a distinct identity. "She is ready to do anything," he says. "For her, the most important thing is the next photo." He flicks his fan. "Also," he adds, "there is something very touching, very vulnerable about her."



In the next room, sitting at one of the tables as a makeup artist puts the finishing touches on her eyes, which are shaded with brown and outlined in black, McMenamy says of Lagerfeld, "He's given me back my pride after I lost it in New York." A hairdresser fits a short black wig over a blue nylon cap covering her hair.

"*Vous allez chercher vos mannequins, s'il vous plaît!*" Dufour calls out, like a town crier, circulating through the crowd. "*On va commencer!*"

McMenamy moves next door and locates her rack, with its poster-board chart listing every outfit: there are separate columns for stockings, scarves, bags, belts, gloves, hats, shoes, and jewelry, and a row of earrings is clipped to the right side. She puts on her first number: a double-breasted black coat, slit to the thigh, lined in red, with an Astrakhan collar, and red snakeskin platform ankle boots, capped, Chanel style, in black at the toe and the heel. A quilted gold leather dog collar is too big and slips down her neck; an assistant pinches it in back and staples it tighter.

"Christy! Helena!" calls a woman clutching a list of the girls in sequence. "Kristen! Gisèle!"

McMenamy falls in line, holding the end of a "leash" attached to the dog collar—a gold chain threaded with black leather—in one hand, like a poodle taking herself for a walk.

"Lisa! Lisa! Karen! Emma! Nadège!"

Gisèle opens her black ciré raincoat like a flasher to reveal a black fishnet body stocking with two black silk camellias—Chanel's signature flower—as pasties.

"Stephanie! Yasmeen!"

This season, Lagerfeld has found his inspiration in the street: in the B-boy style worn by the guys who sell fake-Chanel sweatshirts on the sidewalks in New York; in bikers; in club kids dressed in early-seventies, late-hippie clothes that they bought at the flea market. There are silver quilted leather duckbill caps; black leather motorcycle boots with double-C medallions connecting the ankle straps; rectangular "CHANEL" plates like ID bracelets, the letters cut out, dangling from gold chains; denim suits; bluejeans with the side seams traced in the gold chain that Coco Chanel used to weight the bottom of her classic jacket; chunky gold cuff bracelets in pairs, connected, like handcuffs, by a long chain draping across the back; platform shoes in tweeds that match the suits.

"Jennifer! Kristen! Yasmin Le Bon!"

The girls run from the exit to their racks, ripping off earrings, bracelets, necklaces as they go. Chain belts fall to the floor with a clank. Kristen lies down on the floor, and the fitter takes hold of the jeans she's wearing, studded all over with Chanel buttons, and yanks them off with one mighty tug.

"Gisèle! Christy! Helena!"

Victoire de Castellane, one of Lagerfeld's assistants, who often models in the show, stands waiting her turn, wearing a black satin cocktail dress over a black fishnet body stocking, with big earrings clipped to the lobes of black satin Mickey Mouse ears on a headband.

"Gisèle! Gisèle! Gisèle! Gisèle!"

The final passage is a group of full-skirted evening gowns worn with motorcycle boots and quilted leather bomber jackets.

"Karen! Linda!"

Lagerfeld turns up the collar on Evangelista's white leather jacket, banded in black.

"Karen! Karen!"

"*Oui!*" Karen shrieks.

Yasmin Le Bon scoops up her daughter, who has been dressed in a pink jumpsuit banded with black satin and fastened with Chanel buttons, and carries her down the runway, to cheers and applause that combine to make what from backstage sounds like one big, undifferentiated din. Lagerfeld follows. Moments later, a horde from out front surges backstage to congratulate him. André Leon Talley, the creative director of American *Vogue*, arrives, escorting Sylvester Stallone, whose girlfriend modelled in the show.

FASHION models are professionally silent. In photographs and on the runway, they never speak, and so do nothing to contradict the benefit of the doubt we give them on the basis of their looks. We are slow to believe that anyone as beautiful as, say, Helena Christensen or Christy Turlington could be ruthless or stupid or cruel—though we're perfectly prepared to accuse the people we meet as we go about our everyday lives of being all these things. The equation of beauty with virtue is sooner or later, for all of us, disproved by experience, but the idea lingers in some corner of our minds beyond the reach of logic—a remnant of the stories we were told as children, in which we could always count on the witches to be ugly and the good fairies beautiful. In real life, there is no such justice, but there is, in America, at any rate, a long-standing faith that the practice of virtue produces beauty in those who weren't born with it—that, as the saying goes, people by the time they're fifty have the face they deserve. Writing about the early part of this century, Banner says in "American Beauty," "Both feminists and beauty experts argued that spiritual qualities were more important to creating and maintaining the appearance of beauty than were physical attributes. Both argued that beauty was potentially available to any woman, if she followed the proper ethical path."

In a turn-of-the-century beauty manual, which Banner quotes, Ella Adelia Fletcher wrote that a girl's "very earliest observations and intuitions teach her this fact, that Beauty's path through life is a sort of rose-bordered one, a royal progress; for to Beauty the world, big and little, high and low, pays homage." These days, Beauty's path is a narrow catwalk, built several feet above the ground and bordered not by roses but by photographers, and the homage takes the form of fame, movie-star boyfriends, and fees that can range as high as the

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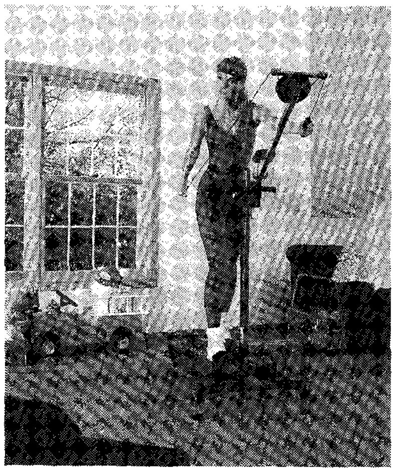

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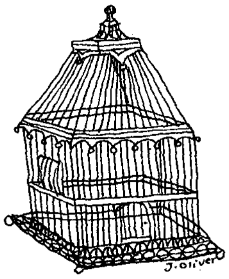
fifty thousand dollars Turlington reportedly received for Gianni Versace's show this season. "As the girl ripens into the woman," Fletcher continued, "every experience in life teaches her that her share of its successes and pleasures will be in proportion to her own ability to win favor, to please, and that the first and most potent influence is physical beauty." For all the apparent headway that has been made in women's lives in the past century, this much remains unchanged: beauty is still a crucial issue, dividing girls early on into haves and have-nots, and, to the same extent that some girls' personalities are shaped by their beauty, other girls' personalities are shaped by their lack of it.



Until the world came around and reversed its verdict on her looks, McMenamy was one of the have-nots. Though she has been vindicated, she still carries with her the memory of childhood slights and insults. In fact, it's only lately that she has come to think of herself as "beautiful" at all, and one senses that it's a notion that hasn't entirely sunk in. To all appearances, she has ascended into the ranks of the great beauties of our time, but not without some misgivings, some reluctance to lay claim to the privileges that come with this prime territory. She tries constantly to come up with new poses. Lindbergh says that at a shooting "she's very nervous always that she will not be good enough, that the picture will not be perfect enough." She has, he says, somehow managed to keep a level head, as most successful girls in this business do not; she is not conceited. "She has always doubts about everything," he explains. She has worked hard to justify herself as a model. Contemplating the behavior of some of her colleagues at a shooting, she says, "How dare they just stand there and look beautiful?" Many, if not most, of them are girls who grew up beautiful, girls whose entrance into a room was consistently greeted with smiles. Strangers offered to carry their suitcases. Men wrote them letters and sent them flowers and begged to be allowed to spend the rest of their lives with them, so that over time these girls came to expect the attention, the kindness, the favors that the rest of us, as we grew up, experienced so rarely, so gratefully. Even now, presiding over the runway at Chanel, decked out in the height of the haute couture, at the center of attention, McMenamy seems to find something vaguely amiss in the world's reflex response to a beautiful girl. While the other models greet the crowd's approval as nothing more than they deserve, she seems slightly dazed by it.

Even if she were inclined to take it for granted, though, the fact is that she's never allowed to get used to it for long. Off the runway, she says, she is never noticed. The discrepancy between who McMenamy is in her photographs and who she is in her life is wider for her than it is for most models. "Linda's Linda," she observes. "She looks the same in the street as she does in the picture." The discrepancy may be one of the reasons that McMenamy isn't more widely known as a model. She looks so different from one picture to the next that sometimes her own mother doesn't recognize her.

It often happens that men ask to be introduced to McMenamy on the basis of how she looks in one of her pictures, and when they finally meet her they're disappointed. "They come up to me and say, 'In that beer ad, you were my dream,'" she says. "*Were.* I walk down the street with no makeup on, and people don't look at me twice. And yet when they see me in magazines they think, Hey, I'd really like to get to know *her.* I'm very photogenic, I know, and I look sexy in front of the camera. I'm an exhibitionist. And I love playing." It's easier, she acknowledges, to play at being somebody else in front of the camera than to do it in real life. "What I do in my profession is a little bit wrong, because I'm selling things you don't really need," she says, but without the ring of conviction, as if this were something that someone once accused her of at a dinner party. "If you've got big boobs, it sells bathing suits," she explains. "If you've got a nice face, it sells magazines." But here she becomes more animated, and the words again sound like her own. "I'm selling unreality," she continues matter-of-factly. "But I don't think about that. It's fun for me, because I can be anything. Because it's an illusion. *I'm* an illusion."

—HOLLY BRUBACH

THE SKY LINE

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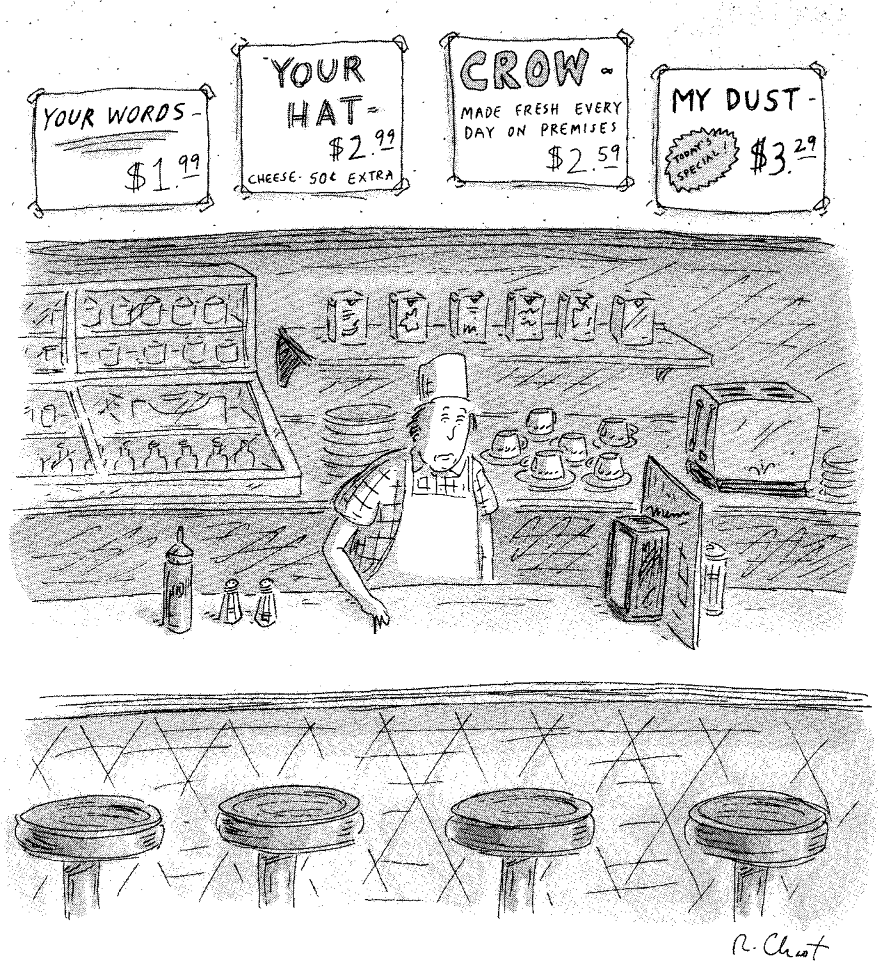
THE recently opened Henri Bendel building, at 712 Fifth Avenue, is notable both as contemporary architecture and as a feat of historic preservation. One wouldn't have anticipated success in the pursuit of two goals that seem so at odds. Nor would one have expected that, in the case of 712, this achievement would be due in large part to what is known as "façadism": the deliberate attempt to preserve, in a condition as nearly pristine as possible, the street front of a building whose interior will have been completely replaced. Façadism is a process that usually arouses—sometimes simultaneously—both high praise and bitter condemnation. More and more frequently in recent years, the practice of façadism has posed for champions of architectural preservation the question "What worthwhile purpose is being served if one is able to save *only* the façade of a distinguished building?"

As if in answer to this question, Bendel's offers an especially attractive argument in favor of façadism. But let me mention first the crucial fact that Fifth Avenue has long been a palimpsest of architectural transfigurations. In the course of continuous remodellings, the city has been practicing a kind of informal, hit-or-miss façadism on the Avenue—and, indeed, all over Manhattan—without bothering to give the process a name. Behind a large number of the Avenue's suavely beguiling shop fronts stand, unknown to most passersby, the concealed skeletal remains of the mansions of long-dead millionaires. Only during the past year, for example, has the old Levi Morton mansion, on the northeast corner of Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street, fallen to the wrecker's ball. It had stood on that busy corner, remarkably little altered by its descent into trade, since 1860.

The façadism that has become a recognized instrument of architectural preservation is of a different sort. Where the preserved façade is only a couple of feet deep, it is likely to strike the untutored citizen strolling past it as little more than a grotesque death mask affixed to an accommodating but unrelated corpse. This is the kind of façadism that people sneer at, and it has become a commonplace in many of our older cities—Philadelphia, Boston, Washington—where in certain districts a simulated antiquity, whether accurately or inaccurately re-created, is meant to feed our longing for a visible past.

It is a rule of thumb that the greater the portion of a building that can be saved and put to some new purpose, the less likely it is that the process will be stigmatized as "mere" façadism. One of the most gratifying examples of how to make such use of a landmark building is the cluster of linked brownstones on Madison Avenue, just behind St. Patrick's Cathedral, that fill the block front between Fiftieth and Fifty-first Streets and are known as the Villard Houses. More than a hundred years after its completion, the exterior of this handsome landmark remains intact, and so does much of the interior, yet only a few years ago it appeared likely that the entire complex would be wantonly thrown down, and replaced by an immense combined office and hotel skyscraper. The Villard Houses survived against high odds and are rightly seen to have silenced the accusation that adversaries of their preservation used to make against them—that they would be but an idle, blank-windowed shell, interrupting the energetic flow of commercial activity along Madison Avenue and reminding us of a Gilded Age that we had no reason to look back upon with pride. Far from persisting as a lifeless façade, the Villard Houses have proved a hub of busyness, in striking contrast to the pair of tomblike ecclesiastical structures—one the rectory and parish house of St. Patrick's Cathedral, the other the residence of Cardinal O'Connor—that flank the Lady Chapel of St. Patrick's, directly opposite them.

Designed in the early eighteen-eighties by the fashionable architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White for Henry Villard, a railway magnate, the houses were originally six in number, intricately dovetailed around an open courtyard facing Madison



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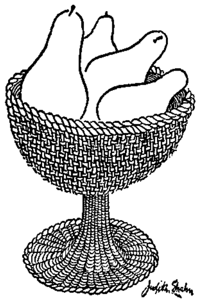
Avenue. Mr. Villard's house, occupying the corner of Madison Avenue and Fiftieth Street, was to be the largest and the most richly appointed. By bad luck, Villard suffered a temporary setback in his financial dealings just as his house was being finished; he and his family retreated to their country estate at Dobbs Ferry, and the house was sold to Elisabeth Mills Reid, the daughter of the financier Darius Ogden Mills. Elisabeth was newly married to the newspaper publisher Whitelaw Reid, and the young couple embellished the corner house with an extravagance that surpassed even the Villards' intentions; Mrs. Reid continued to live there until her death, in 1931. The socially prominent Fahnestock family occupied two of the houses on the north side of the courtyard; in the twenties, they had the architect Charles Platt turn these two comparatively modest houses into one truly grand one, and they lived there until the Second World War.



In 1946, most of the north wing of the Villard Houses was bought by Random House and converted into its headquarters. The remainder of the complex was bought, soon afterward, by the Archdiocese, and housed many of its offices. (A portion of its property, with an entrance on Fifty-first Street, was leased to Capital Cities Communications, Inc., and it still has space there.) Eventually, the Archdiocese bought two additional houses—one on Fiftieth Street just east of the Villard Houses, and the other on a similar site on Fifty-first Street. In 1969, Random House found it necessary to move to much larger quarters elsewhere and put its part of the north wing up for sale. In 1971, upon learning that if this property was sold it would probably be demolished to make room for a high-rise office building, a hundred-and-one-year-old Jewish philanthropist in Hartsdale named Henry J. Gaisman donated two and a quarter million dollars to the Archdiocese to purchase the property and preserve the integrity of the landmark.

As it happened, the Archdiocese, though it accepted the Gaisman gift with alacrity, had already made plans to abandon the Villard Houses, and had consolidated its administrative activities in a new high-rise office building, on First Avenue at Fifty-fifth Street, called the New York Catholic Center. By 1973, the Villard Houses (except for the portion occupied by Capital Cities Communications) were standing vacant. The real-estate boom of the previous decade had collapsed, the city was undergoing its worst recession since 1929, and the Archdiocese was faced with the need to pay more than seven hundred thousand dollars a year in taxes on the Villard property. (After two years, church property not used for religious, educational, or charitable purposes is automatically returned to the tax rolls.) The Archdiocese was delighted when, in 1974, the real-estate developer Harry Helmsley volunteered to take a long lease on the Villard Houses and the two houses to the east of them in order to develop an immense combined office, hotel, and apartment high rise. The real-estate advisers to the Archdiocese wished to retain the land in perpetuity, in part to control development of the property behind the Cathedral. (The practice of retaining ownership of land while leasing it out for large-scale development is a commonplace in New York real estate. Rockefeller Center was built upon land leased from Columbia University. The Queen of England used to—and perhaps still does—own considerable property on Madison Avenue.)

At first, Helmsley was eager to gut the Villard Houses, since it seemed that there was no way to make use of their elaborate interiors in his proposed skyscraper. Architectural preservationists saw that this mutilation of the houses would amount to a loss to the city almost as great (and certainly as inexcusable) as that of Penn Station—the loss that had prompted the establishment of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, in 1965. For perhaps the first time in the city's history, a number of civic bodies, public and private—some of them far more accustomed to being antagonists than to being allies—were able to sit down together and thrash out a means of preserving a historically valuable property. The process required three years, seventy-five official meetings, and fifteen public hearings. In the end, the Municipal Art Society, the Landmarks Conservancy of New York, Community Board No. 5, the Landmarks Preservation Commission, the Planning Commission, assorted officials of the Archdiocese, and Helmsley himself, all accompanied by batteries of attorneys, architects, and self-appointed urban strategists, found a solution that left nearly everyone happy—or, at any rate, not vociferously unhappy.

For commercial reasons, Helmsley had eliminated the office and apartment components of the project; what remained in his plans was a fifty-one-story hotel. Despite his earlier insistence that it was impossible to make use of any part of the Villard Houses, it turned out that the central portion of the houses, which had a quintuple-arched colonnade opening upon the courtyard, provided an ideal pedestrian entrance to a hotel. The interior of this portion of the houses was gutted and rebuilt; a double bank of elevators and a marble stairway with gilded bronze railings joined the lower lobby of the hotel with an upper lobby leading to a ballroom, a dining room, and other facilities. The nobly proportioned rooms, mostly in the south wing, that the Whitelaw Reids had enriched with the handiwork of the sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens, the mosaicist Maitland Armstrong, and the painter John La Farge, all working in collaboration with Stanford White, were carefully restored and, with scarcely any structural change, transformed into reception areas and cocktail lounges. The north wing was leased to the Municipal Art Society, and it established what it called the Urban Center there. The former Fahnestock drawing room and dining room were restored and made suitable for exhibitions, lectures, and the like, while an architectural bookshop fitted cozily into what had once been the Fahnestocks' reception room. The Municipal Art Society, the Parks Council, the Architectural League, and the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects took offices on the upper floors of the north wing; the basement area was rented to a women's specialty shop.

The fifty-one stories of the Helmsley Palace Hotel rose from behind the gabled rooftops of the transformed Villard Houses, and, because the tower was deliberately given a dull, dark-brown exterior, it appeared content to serve as a humble backdrop to the landmark; far from seeming to dominate the courtyard, as some preserva-

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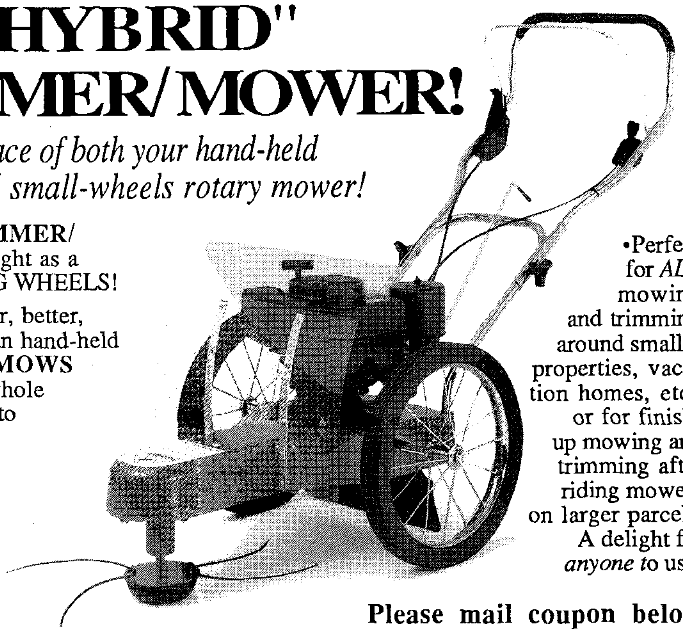

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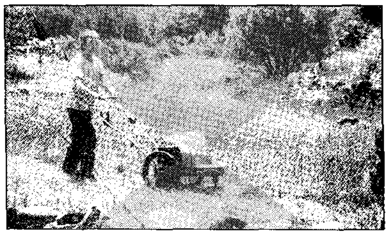

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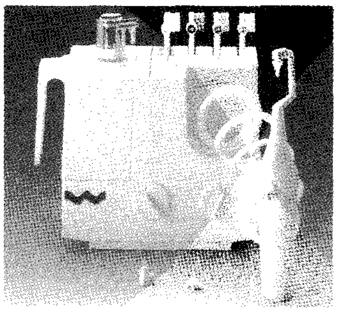

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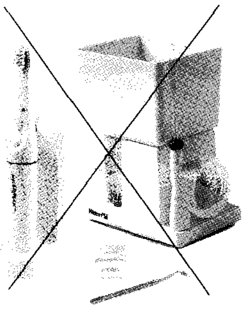

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tionists had feared that it might, the skyscraper gave the impression of being at a considerable distance from it. The entire project was a success—so much so that in 1986, at a dinner held at the Helmsley Palace Hotel for the benefit of the Municipal Art Society, Harry Helmsley took advantage of the occasion to announce (to his credit, with a broad grin) that he was glad to have been able to save the houses "almost single-handed." The audience gasped at his nerve, and then forgivingly applauded him.

THE saving of the Villard Houses was a cliffhanger, extending over several years. The saving of what is now Henri Bendel was also a cliffhanger, but, mercifully, one of shorter duration and entailing less exacerbation of spirit. No. 712 Fifth Avenue is in the middle of the block between West Fifty-fifth and West Fifty-sixth Streets. On the south corner of the block rises the bulky brownstone mass of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, erected in 1875. On the north corner is Harry Winston's jewelry shop. Between the church and Harry Winston's, three other buildings had replaced nineteenth-century brownstones: next to the church, a building most recently occupied by a Rizzoli Bookstore; then a building whose ground-floor retail space was occupied by a shop called Electronic Wonders, Ltd.; and, finally, the tiny premises of a Custom Shop Shirtmakers. These three buildings, along with a couple of other small commercial buildings on West Fifty-sixth Street, behind the Winston building, were bought in 1983 and 1984 by a syndicate of real-estate developers, who intended to put up a skyscraper on the site. (Winston refused to sell his building, so the "footprint" of the new skyscraper would have to embrace it on its two inner sides.) Not long before, the extremely high Trump Tower had replaced the modest Bonwit Teller department-store building diagonally across the street, between East Fifty-sixth and East Fifty-seventh Streets, and beyond the Trump Tower, occupying most of the remainder of that block and the block below it, already loomed the immense I.B.M. and American Telephone & Telegraph skyscrapers. As might have been expected, when the new project was announced an immediate wail of protest went up from local architectural preservationists who wished to retain some portion of the once predominantly low-roofed skyline of the Avenue.

For the preservationists, the difficulty was that, as was not the case with the Villard Houses, only one of the buildings concerned seemed to be worth saving for its architectural merit; that was the building occupied by the Rizzoli Bookstore. The Custom Shop was a trim but conventional commercial structure, with an almost brand-new third-floor addition—nothing worth fighting for there. (Its immediate predecessor, a delectable little jewelry shop in a turn-of-the-century "modern" French style, would have been well worth waging a miniature Armageddon to save.) The building housing the adjacent electronics shop, at 714 Fifth, appeared to hold a minimum of architectural interest: above the garishly lighted ground-floor show window rose three stories of dingy, dusty windows, surmounted by a dormered mansard roof. However, the Rizzoli building, as it had come to be called, was universally admitted to be a charmer; it simply had the bad luck to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. The Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, on the other hand, had the good luck to be in the right place at the right time: by allowing the air rights over its property to be included in the footprint for the projected skyscraper, the church received the sum of $15.75 million, which it has since been spending on long-overdue repairs.

The Rizzoli building has a characteristic New York City pedigree. In 1886, the church built a parsonage on the empty plot of land abutting it to the north. As commercial enterprises usurped residences along Fifth Avenue, land kept doubling and redoubling in value, and it became obvious that the church would do well to knock down the parsonage and erect in its place a commercial building, capable of producing substantial revenues. In 1907, the church, seeking a building that, as a next-door neighbor, would prove tasteful as well as profitable, gave the commission for its design to a local architect, Albert S. Gottlieb (1870-1942), who attended Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute, M.I.T., and the École des Beaux-Arts. On returning home from the Beaux-Arts, in the middle nineties, Gottlieb had entered the offices of McKim, Mead & White, the busiest firm in town, and was assigned to design a couple of their biggest jobs—the Metropolitan Club and the new buildings for Columbia University, up on Morningside Heights. Gottlieb opened his own office in 1901, and soon designed a few well-received office buildings on lower Fifth Aven and some attractive summer residences along the New Jersey shore.

In deference to the fading but still much-admired residential ambience of Fifth Avenue, Gottlieb designed a commercial building in the style of an eighteenth-century neoclassical Parisian town house. (Appropriately, its first tenant was the Paris firm of interior decorators A. Alavoine, followed some years later by Cartier.) To this day, the detailing of the building gives strollers on the Avenue much pleasure, heightened by something now rare (*but not, as we shall see, unobtainable*)—the high quality of its execution. For half a century, I have been observing with admiration the delightful lunette and oculus, decorated with stone swags, that fills the arch above the entrance, at the northerly end of the building; its balustraded second-story French casement windows; and the decorative stone urns upon its parapet. When the Landmarks Preservation Commission came into existence, in 1965, it never crossed my mind that the building would not sooner or later be designated a landmark. Yet, though it was twice proposed for designation by the commission staff, and the proposal once went as far as a public hearing, no action was taken by the commissioners, who appear to have reasoned that there were other buildings more urgently in need of designation. Thus, when the three properties were bought and were about to be demolished, there was little reason to suppose that the commission would either wish to save the Rizzoli building or be in a proper legal posture to do so. Indeed, many preservationists, I among them, feared that the commission would do its reputation for prudence grave damage if it sought to designate the Rizzoli building as a landmark at so late a stage in the proceedings. After all, the developers had bought the properties in good faith, and at a high price, on the assumption that they would be building a skyscraper on a Fifth Avenue site that, desirable in itself, was all the more desirable in their eyes because it *wasn't* occupied by a building officially designated a landmark. And the skyscraper that was to rise on the site was already being designed in the offices of Kohn Pedersen Fox.

At that critical moment, enter a young architectural historian named Andrew Scott Dolkart, who had been hired by the Municipal Art Society to look into the history of a number of buildings along the Avenue, with the thought that the Landmarks Preservation Commission might someday designate a Fifth Avenue Historic District. In the course of his labors, Dolkart made an astonishing discovery: the soiled, dusty windows on the upper floors of No. 714 Fifth Avenue, that shabby old building between the Rizzoli building and the Custom Shop, turned out to have been fashioned by the great French glassmaker René Lalique.

The facts as Dolkart uncovered them were these: No. 714 had been built as a brownstone row house sometime in the early eighteen-seventies, and in 1898 it had come into the possession of a Buffalo manufacturer, Charles A. Gould, who had begun to invest in New York City real estate. In 1906, Gould commissioned the architect Woodruff Leeming to design a new front for the building, with the intention of making it more attractive to commercial tenants. Like Arthur Gottlieb, Leeming (1870-1919) was trained at M.I.T. and the École des Beaux-Arts. His design was very much *à la mode de Paris*, with dainty iron and stone detailing, great expanses of glass, and a mansard roof. In 1910, Gould rented the building to the perfumer François Coty, for his American headquarters. A few years earlier, Coty had asked Lalique, a jeweller who had come to prefer working in glass, to design the bottles in which Coty perfumes were sold. Coty was Lalique's first major commercial client; the two men became friends, and Lalique opened a shop next to Coty's in the Place Vendôme. It was natural for Coty to call upon Lalique to add a certain note of Parisian *dernier cri* to the Coty shop in New York.

The Coty windows, which are thought to have been installed in 1912, are among the earliest examples of Lalique's architectural work in molded glass. The design, meant to be viewed from both the exterior and the interior of the building, embraces the windows from the third to the fifth floors of the building in a continuous pattern of interwoven vines and blossoms that have been variously described by amateur botanists as poppies, anemones, and tulips. Coty moved to other quarters in 1941; eventually, the Coty company was sold to Pfizer, Inc., and whatever records of the decorative glass the Coty company may have possessed were thrown away or lost.

Other tenants came and went at 714, and the Lalique windows became obscured with dirt and were forgotten.

With the true historian's élan, Dolkart succeeded in tracing a retired Coty executive, and he was quick to confirm that Lalique had indeed designed the windows. Dolkart informed the Municipal Art Society of his discovery; the Municipal Art Society got in touch with the *Times*; and David Dunlap, a reporter for that paper, wrote a story about "New York's most freshly discovered treasure," which "may end up as the latest one to be lost." Inspired by the interest that this column aroused, the Landmarks Preservation Commission immediately scheduled a public hearing on the Coty and Rizzoli buildings. The hearing was held at City Hall on January 8, 1985. Two of the developers who shared ownership of the property—G. Ware Travelstead and David and Jean Solomon—and a number of other speakers testified to their astonishment and dismay that a project already so far advanced could be brought to a halt by the discovery of a few old windows in what everyone had previously dismissed as a mediocre building. Nevertheless, on January 29, 1985, the Landmarks Preservation Commission, to the surprise of many, designated the Rizzoli and Coty buildings as landmarks.

For a time, the owners contemplated a lawsuit to have the designations set aside. They went so far as to apply to the commission for permission to demolish the buildings under the economic-hardship provision of New York City's Landmarks Preservation Law. In the end, however, the owners decided to submit a new design for their proposed skyscraper—one that preserved the two designated façades and added a new, "infill" façade in matching style to take the place of the former Custom Shop façade. A fifty-three-story office tower would spring from a point fifty feet in from Fifth Avenue, having its main entrance on West Fifty-sixth Street and a secondary entrance on the Avenue. The heterogeneous jumble of spaces behind the three Fifth Avenue façades would be gutted, rebuilt, and seamlessly connected to the first five floors of the tower, to create a total of almost eighty thousand square feet of retail-shopping space.

Fortunately, an ideal tenant for this space was almost immediately at hand. In October of 1985, The Limited, Inc., owners of a chain of some four thousand women's specialty shops from coast to coast, bought Henri Bendel, a fashionable department store that had been situated on West Fifty-seventh Street since 1912. The Limited, Inc., announced that it was planning to open a new, "flagship" Bendel's—presumably the first of a succession of Henri Bendels to be established throughout the country—and what better location for a flagship store could there be than the landmark buildings on Fifth Avenue? After several weeks of discussion with the Landmarks Preservation Commission and further tinkerings with the proposed scheme, the developers and The Limited, Inc., decided that responsibility for the design of the project should be shared by two firms of architects. The mostly new structure that would be built on Fifth Avenue, incorporating the historic façades, would be placed in the hands of Beyer Blinder Belle—an architectural firm that had recently remodelled a McKim, Mead & White building into a shop for The Limited at 691 Madison Avenue and had a great deal of experience in the preservation of landmarks—while the design for the office tower would remain in the hands of Kohn Pedersen Fox.

In May, 1985, the Landmarks Preservation Commission gave its approval to a final revision of the project. Soon afterward, Mr. Travelstead withdrew as one of the syndicate of developers. His interest was assumed by the Taubman Company, best known as a builder of shopping malls and as the owner of Sotheby's, and early this year the Taubman Company took effective control of the project as a whole. In

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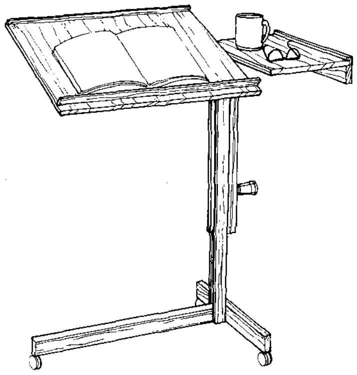

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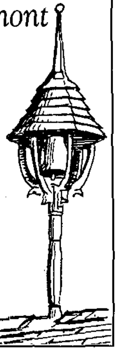

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their negotiations with the commission, the owners of the property agreed to make a generous gift to the citizens of New York: while the refurbished Coty façade, with its three-story glass wall of Lalique flowers and vines, would serve as one of three entrances to Bendel's, the area immediately behind the façade would be given over not to commercial use but to a so-called "landmark" atrium, open to the public and providing it, on several levels, with an opportunity to admire the Lalique glass at close range.

THE new Henri Bendel opened on an evening in late February, with a gala benefit for the Municipal Art Society. (The guest of honor, absent on his doctor's orders, was former Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan, Jr., who, in 1978, had written the opinion upholding the constitutionality of the Landmarks Preservation Law.) It was immediately obvious that in this instance, as in that of the Villard Houses, the word "façadism" would be uttered only in praise. To the casual passerby on Fifth Avenue, it was simply and gratifyingly the case that some elegant shop fronts of an earlier era, echoing a perhaps imaginary Parisian Belle Époque, had been restored to life. The new skyscraper that had been built behind those shop fronts was a classically proportioned limestone-clad tower, and it appeared to emerge from some indeterminate area in mid-block, and to have no connection with the Avenue itself. Despite its great height, it had an air not so much of looking down upon its nearby turn-of-the-century neighbors, the St. Regis Hotel and the Gotham Hotel (now the Peninsula), as of hoping to become an accepted member of the club.

The Beyer Blinder Belle team led by associate partner Christopher Barriscale deserves high marks for preserving, without the taint of a patronizing contemporary prettiness, two historic-landmark façades; it deserves even higher marks for creating, in the buoyant, light-filled spaces behind the façades, an ambience of transatlantic chic, true to the ghosts of Alavoine, Cartier, Coty, and Lalique. The atrium rises four stories to a circular skylight, neatly fitted into an attic under the dormered roof of the Coty building. The floor of the atrium is of beige Burgundian marble and its walls are of limestone, also quarried in Burgundy. Pedestrian bridges span the atrium on three levels. Sunlight streams through a total of two hundred and seventy-six panes of Lalique glass. Black iron railings framing the two main flights of stairs within the shopping area are intended to imitate the writhing upward motion of flames; they are the handiwork of a French designer, Marie-Paule Pellé. Another French designer, François Catroux, has created four spectacular boutiques, sequestered on different levels of the shop in such a way that the bewitched shoppers forget that they are laboriously climbing stairs and begin, in effect, to levitate.

The Bendel building is a manifestation of a neglected truth: contrary to common belief, it is possible in our day to obtain first-rate workmanship in almost every aspect of the building trades. One has only to be willing to pay a high price for it—and that is precisely what one would have had to do a hundred years ago, or a thousand. I assume that the cost of the building was many times greater than it would have been if, in the usual fashion, corners had been cut in order to keep the budget within "reasonable" bounds. I assume as well that it is Leslie Wexner, the founder and chairman of The Limited, Inc., who set this exceptionally high standard of excellence in design and construction. Mr. Wexner is a learned amateur of architecture, a collector of contemporary art, and, as a businessman-builder, a benefactor of architects and artists alike. (A few years ago, he gave twenty-five million dollars for the erection of an art center at his alma mater, Ohio State University. At about the same time, his company restored the former Stuyvesant Fish mansion, designed by Stanford White, which stands on the northwest corner of Seventy-eighth Street and Madison Avenue.)

During this troubled period in the city's history, we cast about every day for some small scrap of good news to fling in the face of the bad. No. 712 Fifth Avenue is far more than a scrap, and it is only because, as a hardened New Yorker, I am wary of bestowing unstinted praise that I offer in public a conventional three cheers for Mr. Wexner, his architects, and his builders. In my heart, secretly, I offer them a joyous four.

—BRENDAN GILL

BOOKS

Imagination Pressing Back

THE imagination—an ingredient as necessary to poetry as rhythm and active language—tends to be a faculty more often invoked than described, more often praised (as present) or lamented (as absent) than explained. It is the mind's pressing back against reality (Stevens), and it often takes the form of a casting beyond: the line of a fisherman or of the spider cast up, out, away, down—"till," as Whitman says, "the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere, O my soul." The cast may be truly incomprehensible to others (as that of Blake was for a long time), and it is wished on the poet by destiny. The poet can try over a lifetime to expand its reach, to multiply the number of points it goes after, but the essential direction of its pressure may be genetically determined as the instructions for the spider's web. The imagination is concerned not only to catch, or catch onto, something but to make its cast elastic, free, athletic, clean-lined, shapely, taut with the aim of the seeking line. What it seeks is the counterpressure to what threatens it. The imaginative cast of each poet can be seen most clearly by comparison. The three poets I compare here—Frank Bidart, Albert Goldbarth, and Amy Clampitt—have all by now defined themselves unmistakably through a series of books.

Bidart's "In the Western Night: Collected Poems 1965-90" (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $19.95) dares to claim as its imaginative terrain the philosophical dialectic of the West, now in disarray. This disarray affects Bidart the way a prolonged estrangement from a lifelong friend would pain someone else. (This is what I mean by the specificity of a poet's imaginative compulsion; Bidart's success or failure rides on how strongly he can make us feel his anguish over philosophical undecidability and power-hungry metaphysical egotism.) In the most ambitious of the new poems collected here, "The First Hour of the Night," Bidart describes yearningly the figures in Raphael's fresco "The School of Athens," in which, with equable Renaissance symmetry and stability, Philosophy looks at Theology, Poetry faces Jurisprudence. But Bidart announces the end of

the Neo-Platonic Christian-
Humanist
CONFIDENCE that the world's obdurate
contradictions, terrifying
unintelligibility,
can be *tamed* by CLASSIFICATION.

In a dream vision, Bidart enters the world of the fresco, but a nightmare follows, in which he sees more figures crowd into the fresco: Descartes, Hegel, Schelling, Comte, D'Alembert, Kant, Luther, Sheherezade, Medusa. Instead of the poised balance of the Renaissance fresco, with Plato pointing up and Aristotle down (idealism countered by materialism), the scene degenerates into one of spitefully warring factions, described in Bidart's characteristically desperate typography:

—What one thinker confidently
ASSERTED,
another *spurned* as ILLUSION—.

Matter disputes Spirit for supremacy: hurrying back and forth between them, philosophical mediators negotiate in distress. Bidart's narration resumes with his central sentence:

. . . indeed, I felt
pain at this scene:—to see
PHILOSOPHY itself
divided, torn
into three, or even *more* directions—;
. . . the unity of my being
torn.

The nightmare worsens: what had formerly seemed, in each group of philosophers, a search for truth is now visible as yet another naked claim to social power, and (after a vision of Christians slaughtering Jews during the Crusades) Bidart's speaker concludes that the Kantian "*moral law within*" is nothing but a rationalization of self-interest. That law

is near to MADNESS—; everything terrible
but buried in human motivation

released, justified
by SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS and
FANATICISM—.

And not only is "Truth" fatally embroiled with power; it is inseparable from and dependent on historical change.

These are, of course, postmodernist truisms, and only a device as dramatic, and as surprisingly concluded, as Bidart's increasingly phantasmagorical nightmare could take us through their dawning on a single mind, undermining truth, disinterestedness, balance—all the concepts we use to think with. As Raphael's Temple of Reason collapses, it swallows the very structure of Western tradition:

(—this '*tradition*' that I cannot
THINK MY LIFE

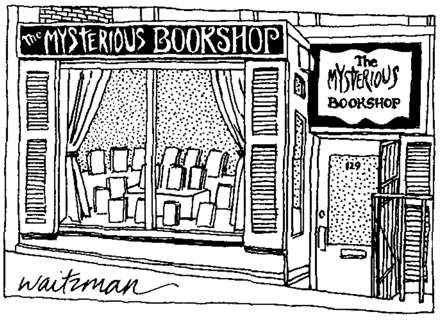
without, nor POSSESS IT within—;).

In explaining his agitated typography—seen at its full extent in these lines—Bidart says (in an earlier interview reprinted at the end of "In the Western Night"):

> I needed a way to embody the mind moving *through* the elements of its world, actively contending with and organizing them. . . .
>
> Punctuation allows me to "lay out" the *bones* of a sentence visually, spatially, so that the reader can see the pauses, emphases, urgencies and languors in the voice.

The effort of reproducing the "mercurial and paradoxical" qualities of the human voice in trauma, and "the *volume* of the voice (from very quiet to extremely loud)," meant that "many words and phrases had to be not only entirely capitalized, but in italics." Bidart has, in short, applied to the page the sort of marks we are accustomed to in musical scores—rests, crescendos and decrescendos, tempo indications, marks for legato and rubato, and so on.

Bidart's longer poems—printed arias for solo voice—have almost always pressed language back against extremity: the suicide of Binswanger's anorexic patient Ellen West, Callas's self-destructive dieting in the service of art, Nijinsky's attempt (ending in mad-



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ness) to encompass all of the First World War in a dance, and, in an early fictional poem, the feelings of Herbert White, child molester and murderer. Even Bidart's short first-person lyrics catch their speakers in unbearable situations, like the *odi et amo* of Catullus (in Bidart's stylish translation):

> I hate *and* love. Ignorant fish, who even
> wants the fly while writhing.

The torments of flesh and spirit mimed in Bidart's erotic poems and dramatized philosophically in "The First Hour of the Night" find their origin in Bidart's early, family poems, which can now be read, with the wisdom of hindsight, less as the "confessional" poems they once seemed than as the first examples of an obstinate and tenacious dissection of Western conceptuality. Freud was Bidart's original mentor in this anatomy of "reality," with reality, like charity, beginning at home. In the longer run, though, Bidart was after less corporeal game than the Oedipal riddle. His second mentor was Augustine, in whom the autobiographical (Oedipal, guilt-ridden) and the theological are inseparable. The theological is, in fact, the Augustinian "solution" to the Oedipal, and the most tragic moment in Bidart's collected poems turns on his having been unable to find with his own mother what the converted Augustine found with his mother in their common Christianity. In Bidart's "Confessional," Augustine and his mother, Monica, their earlier differences resolved, stand together ecstatically at a window in Ostia, contemplating "what the saints' possession of God is like":

> —While they were thus talking of,
> straining to comprehend,
> panting for this WISDOM, with all the
> effort
>
> of their heart, for one heartbeat,
>
> they together attained to *touch* it—;

And nine days after the reconciliatory conversation Monica was dead. But Bidart's mother, as we see her in his poem, never understood her life, its two failed marriages, its absence of profession or creativity; she "felt she was here for some REASON,—/. . . but never found it." And "Confessional," a modern poem of failed family romance and failed theology, addressed to a psychoanalyst, ends with another intractable *odi et amo:*

> *Man needs a metaphysics;*
> *he cannot have one.*

"Confessional" articulates epigrammatically the dilemma that issues full-blown in "The First Hour of the Night": earlier, man could not, though he needed one, have a metaphysics; now he can see that all previous systems of metaphysics, from Plato and Aristotle on, are both historically conditioned and politically self-interested. Most "confessional" poets remain on the relational and psychological planes; Bidart is compelled—or condemned—to the relational as an instance of the metaphysical, and even of the theological.

The unsatisfactory homosexual experiences (no more unsatisfactory than heterosexual experiences) that, together with the Oedipal bond, provide the ground of Bidart's imagination show us Bidart's voice at another level of suffering. Yet, lest we think that his is a solely masochistic imagination, two idylls, both translations, suggest what might quiet its exacerbations. One is the eternal Western fantasy, in Genesis, of a vegetarian and nonviolent Paradise; the other is John of the Cross's vision of the erotic ecstasy that follows the dark night of the soul. Bidart's "Dark Night" is the best translation yet—in terms of independently realized poetic success—of the *noche oscura:*

> Winds from the circling parapet circling
> us as I lay there touching and lifting
> his hair,—
> with his sovereign hand, he
> wounded my neck—
> and my senses, when they touched
> that, touched nothing . . .
>
> In a dark night (*there where I*
> *lost myself,*—) as I leaned to rest
> in his smooth white breast, every-
> thing
> ceased
> and left me, forgotten in the grave
> of forgotten lilies.

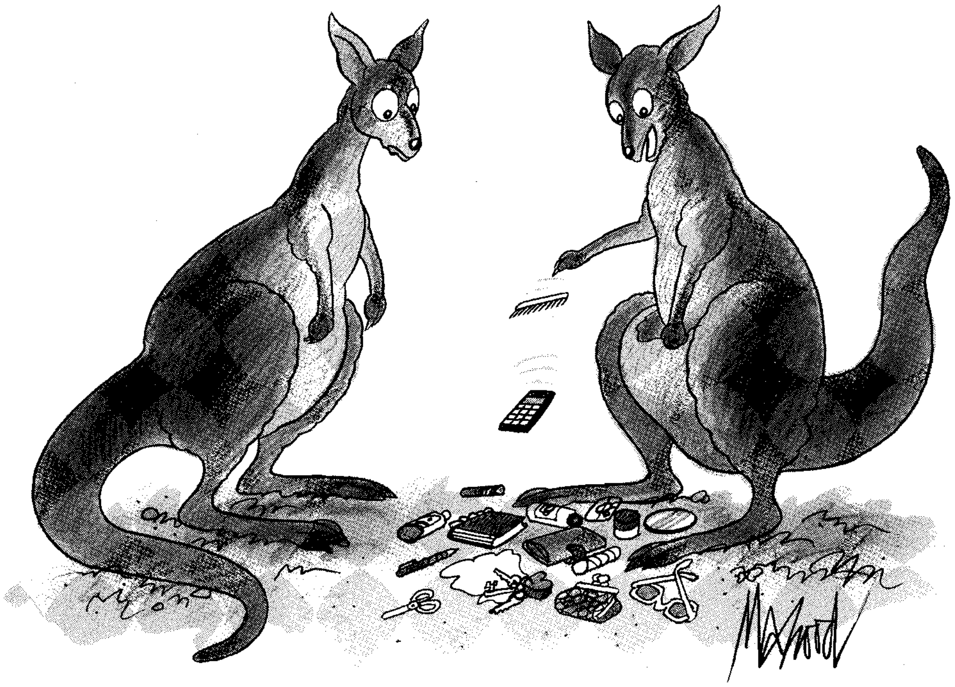
Bidart's rage to be faithful to both sides of his divided nature leads him to pull roughly together—as if to insist on their inseparability—the two actions we disjoin by the words "love" and "sex"; he is exalted by "love" into quoting Plotinus, and is almost immediately fumbling for sex:

> First, I was there where unheard
> harmonies create the harmonies
>
> we hear—
>
> then I was a dog, sniffing
> your crotch.

Bidart dares us, with his outright bathos, to say if we are any different.

Is not the mortifying bathos itself the "truth," rather than either side of the contradiction? In Bidart, extremes are not located on either end of a "decently" extended continuum; they are constantly jammed against each other, making a mockery of the very convention that assigns to them the word "extremes."

Bidart's imagination—to return to the place where we began—puts material desire in the same space as spiritual desire, and not in a Franciscan or Hopkinsian way, as the manifestation of the Platonic One in the many, but, rather, in an Augustinian way, as though the spiritual could find no path for itself except through the starving and gluttoning flesh and its "cauldron of unholy loves." But Bidart's imagination is characterized not only by its content; it is equally recognizable by its vocal motions, its cadenzas, its musical stops and starts (the heartbeats of the mind), its protestations and exclamations, its metaphysical leaps, the pantings of the soul, the uncontrollable erections of the body. Though I have previously invoked bel canto when writing of Bidart's improvisations for solo voice, the recent poetry seems more like oratorio: " 'The School of Athens,' a cantata for male narrator and chorus." Deconstructive drama takes on in Bidart's poem of philosophical collapse a moral seriousness that it does not always exhibit in its didactic form. No poem can now exist for Bidart which does not question its own moral position-taking. To see oneself as a historically conditioned person of questionable motives and at the same time give lyric pathos to that skeptical vision is a hard task, and yet it is what is being attempted by several honest contemporary poets. Bidart is distinguished among them by his choice of the dramatic monologue, and by the pitch of the extremities that drive his imagination.



"He's got to be in here somewhere!"

• •

ALBERT GOLDBARTH is not, as Bidart is, a moral extremist. But, like Bidart, he is troubled by his historical position, and moves restlessly through the past, trying to see, on the one hand, its most unrepeatable specificities and, on the other, what, if anything, it exhibits in the way of similarity to contemporary reality. If the human "fraction" (Melville's term) is always searching tirelessly for its other half, as in Plato's myth, Goldbarth exhibits that search. More than once, he imagines the myth alive in himself. The attempt we all make, he says in his 1986 volume, "Arts & Sciences," is

to be the wheel Plato says
we all were in the days when man
and woman formed a single-bodied
being rolling breezily over the world.

. . . I
only know I've walked the darkness
wanting more than any
Stonehenge to align with something
bright. And then the lunar
dole of remnant sunlight touched me
—here: an x between
the shoulderblades, those made-for-
raising things. They stirred. Not
wings, no. More like the fossils of
wings.

The title "Arts & Sciences" is true to the burrowing inquisitiveness that leads Goldbarth to read about everyone from the Egyptians to Madame Curie, and to speculate on past culture. His recent book, "Popular Culture" (Ohio State; $17.95), faces up to the other primal material of his imagination—pop culture, the earliest source of the rich multiplicity that appeases the collector in him. In "novelties," comic books, and advertising he finds his first ripe satisfactions. He goes with his father, year after year, to a trade show at the World Trade Center, and finds enumeration crossed with nascent sex:

Miss Cherry Harvest of 1954 is savvily
bing-bedecked
in snug red mounds of endorsement.
Miss Home Hardware
overflows a gray bikini-top (done as a
wingnut). Miss
Asbestos Insulation. Miss Kosher
Franks. The Aluminum
Siding Queen of 1957.

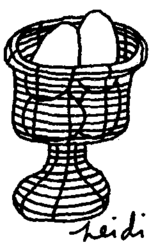
Though Goldbarth is now compelled (by women's liberation and his own reluctant adulthood) to imagine how Miss Home Hardware et al. actually *felt* (some loved the exposure, some hated the debasement), his ideological correction can't quite outdo the spell of the cornucopia of pop culture and its imaginary and buoyant transformations:

We hate you. We're telling you now:
we're ashamed,
Miss Amalgamated Canning Concerns, Miss Taxidermy, Miss Soybean Dealers. . . .
We value you, with incredible passion. Miss Loosened Burnoose
in the Deepening Desert Sunset,
Miss Tonsils, Miss Lesbian Love,
Miss Verdigris Glimmering Beautifully On A Hull Though No One
Sees It . . .
Do you
miss us? Miss Us. Miss You.

These few excerpts have to stand for the hundred-plus lines of the poem "The World Trade Center." Loquacity is a part of Goldbarth's act; his rhetoric is eager to mirror the number of things the world is full of, the unexpected fulfillments it holds in its arms. Goldbarth is a comic poet, and though his seriously undertaken and undeniably grieving poems on the deaths of his parents elicit sympathy, they don't bring forth his best tones, which are those of childlike absorption and of joy in plenty. He has, and understands, the true collector's mania. In one of his best poems ("Neologisms," from "Arts & Sciences") we hear Darwin speaking in the *exaltatio ad absurdum* of the collector:

> One day, on tearing off some old bark, I
> saw two rare beetles, and seized one in each hand; then I saw a
> third and new kind, which I could not bear to lose, so that
> I popped the one which I held in my right hand into my mouth.

The zoological adventurousness of a Darwin, the devotion unto death of a Marie Curie, the choreographic inventiveness of a Loie Fuller, the heroism of the explorers who found the source of the Nile, the tenacity of a Champollion deciphering the Rosetta stone—these are for Goldbarth the exemplary virtues. They represent the imagination resisting the limitations of the known, and casting forth from the self into the uncharted: the direction of the cast and its cost do not matter; the imagination to conceive such a cast does.



The other half of Goldbarth's imagination hasn't yet, I think, found its adequate embodiment. It is what is usually called religious, and it leans toward New Age superstitions: that we have had past lives (examples are adduced of nonmusical mediums who wrote Schubert pieces, of nonarcheologist mediums who knew what human uses certain nameless prehistoric stone lumps had been put to); that there is a collective unconscious (Jung and mandalas are mentioned); that one can address at least the possibility of angelic messengers and miraculous coincidences. Behind these casts of the imagination in Goldbarth (always accompanied by skeptical misgivings) lie the religious convictions of his childhood and his cousin's tales of the Baal Shem Tov (retold in his 1990 book of essays, "A Sympathy of Souls"). Goldbarth contemplates the religious imagination with an uncomplicated nostalgia—the enviable preserve, perhaps, of those to whom their parents' religion has done no damage. Unlike Bidart, he does not interrogate religious sentiment with respect to what it may have produced in the way of mendacity, hatred, or oppression in the past. Goldbarth's tenderness toward the mystical does not, however, vitiate his enormous curiosity, or the momentum of his zest, or his sympathy of souls with the historical personages he resuscitates.

Here, for instance, are his urgent attempts to understand the withdrawal and chill felt by Mary Shelley (daughter of William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft) after her husband's drowning:

> As if the death of her mother
> 10 days after childbirth; and that ever-receding
> interest of the dispassionate father; and Fanny's
> laudanum suicide; and Harriet's
> drowning suicide; and the death of her own first
> daughter "less than two weeks, only"; and Willy
> gone, and Clara gone, reduced to two already
> lusterless locks in an album—weren't enough.
> So now the Gulf took
> him, too. No wonder she needed retreating,
> no wonder Trelawny once joked they should seat her
> at table "to ice the wine."

Unlike Bidart, who moves Augustine and Monica into his own metaphysical story, Goldbarth moves himself into Mary Shelley's historical life. Where Bidart spaces his minimalist sentences of confusion and distress far apart across the page, Goldbarth's montage here speeds up a woman's life into a cruel set of obituaries. This is at once Goldbarth's strength (his historical and fictional sympathy) and his weakness. He settles, perhaps too rapidly, into an unexamined ratification of his own choices (to remember life-affirming moments, to communicate across the static of distance and alienation), scanting the scathing self-examination so patent in Bidart. Nostrums—true and soothing ones—spring to Goldbarth's lips; I don't blame him for thinking of them but, rather, for not finding better words for them. He recalls, for instance, the happier time when Shelley and Mary Shelley knew the intensity of early marriage and writing to each other:

> I
> don't know if it sufficed.—And don't know what
> abiding strength
> a time of vital commonality provides, against
> the decimating powers. Maybe little. But it's all
> we can do, so should do—she did.

The clichés here ("abiding strength," "vital commonality") are drawn from an enfeebled religious language.

Goldbarth does much better when he finds a striking image for what he stubbornly clings to, the residue of religious faith. "That preliterate place faith comes from" is the subject of "Again," a poem on the death of Goldbarth's father, in which the poet finds himself, at his father's bedside, repeating like a mantra the words "Don't let him die." He recalls the age-old belief in the efficacy of pure repetition as prayer, and, characteristically, recalls a historical incident:

> So I thought of Japan,
> the *Sheet of 1,000 Buddhas:* how a single woodblock stamp has meant
> so many duplications of the same small holy figure—each,
> its nimbus; each, its dole of glow to keep back its commensurate
> dole of benightedness. They finally make a pattern each is
> lost in: each a quantum of light, in light. In fact in 770 A.D.,
> the Empress Koken commanded one *million* prints of a Buddhist charm
> be stamped by copper blocks, "to ward off illness" says the story, which is
> this story as well.

Charms for the spiriting back of the dead (among the dead being Goldbarth's own child-self at ten or thirteen) besprinkle "Popular Culture." Even dead words are seduced back. A Sherlock Holmes poem lingers over words in the process of disappearing:

> *Landau* clattered by for the last time. *Brougham*
> followed close behind. These carriages. . .
>
> [would] never return to an *ostler*, never again. And he
> would never cumbersomely buckle into his *ulster*.
> Would people seek "lodgings" some time, announcing themselves
> by "calling cards"? And what of "jollification,"
> what of "apoplexy"—both these bisque-red
> flushings of the cheeks were disappearing.

In the way certain poets care about the natural world, Goldbarth cares about the historical world, slowly vanishing into unintelligibility and extinction of species unless rescued by a Champollion or a poet.

The typical procedure in a Goldbarth poem, which gives it its quick, at first unsettling, transitions, is to keep two or three stories in mind at once, each of them somehow an analogue or a contradiction of another. In "Again," hoping against hope for his dying father's survival, Goldbarth recalls a story concerning a Japanese sailor shipwrecked on a coral reef in 1784; at the end of the poem, we learn that the bottle with the sailor's farewell message in it washed up a hundred and fifty years later, against all odds, on the beach outside the Japanese village where he was born. In between, there are stories of Goldbarth's divorce and of the night nurse's estranged husband as well as the passage about the Empress Koken and her million Buddha prints. As we read, we live, temporarily, in the restless and eccentrically furnished mind of the writer sitting at his father's bedside trying to account for his own unwilled chant, "Don't let him die."

Normally, lyric poetry longs to purge itself of the circumstantial, but Goldbarth resists that tendency. He is willing to go down with his ship and its cargo; if its almost random ballast sinks it, he will sink with it, but he hopes that his message will, in any case, wash up on his native shores. His patient and exact salvaging of the past will move many readers, who will remember, with him, in "Powers," the popular culture of his boyhood:

> I read
> by flashlight under the covers: City Hall was being burgled
> of its Gems of the World display, and Captain Invincible faced
> a Mineral Ray (that already turned 2 bank guards and a porter
> into clumsily-rendered crystalline statues). . .
>
> The Dynamo
> could will himself into a wielder of electrical jolts, and even
> invaders from Alpha-10 were vanquished. . . .
>
> I wasn't Me but
> an inchoate One of Them. With their Wave Transmitter Wristlets,
> with their wands, their auras, their cowls. The Insect Master.
> Blockbuster. Astro Man.

The boy diving under the covers to ose himself in these conquering fic-ions is attempting to forget the dis-naying present, as we discover when he poem ends. In a humiliating inci-

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dent from the barely marginal life his parents keep afloat, the boy hears his father heroically explain to the landlady that he doesn't have the week's rent. The almost mindless obsessiveness of a ten-year-old boy's fantasy justifies itself against the terrors of a renter's world.

Goldbarth's poems still play out that earliest set of defenses. Horror and death in the present set his responses spinning to the past, to religious speculation, to historical virtue, to fortifying stories, to art—to any of its refuges: "Words / with one foot over the precipice, / called back / to bodies again." What would happen if Goldbarth refused his sideways skittering into myth, history, science fiction, and popular culture, and faced, without eventual recourse to memory, the meanness of the here and now and the relative impotence of the imagination? Perhaps it is the very condition of his reclamatory profusion that he cannot.

IT is metaphysics, as I have said, on which Bidart falters; metaphysics will not give him a stable, disinterested, and transhistorical "Truth," so he flees to the ethical realms of memory, loss, guilt, and the burdens of the past. But the spiritual impossibility of subsisting only on the frustrations of human connection sends Bidart's imagination back, again and again, to beat its wings against more stringent and absolute questions of truth and falsehood, eternity and time, politics and power. It is death and historical transience at which Goldbarth falters, turning away from them to other realms, alternative multiverses, hyperspace. And yet his imagination returns, compelled, to the black holes into which his fantastic creations, however elaborate, are relentlessly drawn.

For Amy Clampitt, landscape is the refuge to which, for its serenity, its visual variety, its biological laws, she turns in order to resolve questions of sexual identity, of unsatisfactory family relations, of the expectations of society, of the history of Iowa (whence she fled, in her twenties, to Greenwich Village). Reading, of course, was one resource of this bookish child, but nothing in her reading—not even Andersen or the Greek myths—ever gave her the pure wordless solace of the earth's changing sights and sounds.

Landscape was for Clampitt the first aesthetic realm, and in a central poem, "The Field Pansy," from her new collection, "Westward" (Knopf; $18.95), she tells the story of all aesthetic people dismayed to discover that the beauty that so assuages and reassures them does absolutely nothing for someone else:

Life was hard in the hinterland, where spring arrived
with a gush of violets, sky-blue out of the ground of the woodlot,
but where a woman was praised by others of her sex for being
Practical, and by men not at all, other than in a slow reddening
about the neck, a callowly surreptitious wolf-whistle: where the mode

was stoic, and embarrassment stood in the way of affect:
a mother having been alarmingly seen in tears, once only
we brought her a fistful of johnny-jump-ups from the garden,
"because you were crying"—and saw we'd done the wrong thing.

The second stanza here is the final one of the poem, and, though all the others have five lines, it has only four, because the mother's rebuffing response shocks the child (and the later poet) into silence, represented by an aborted line of stifled feeling.

What, then, is the use of beauty, if it can heal oneself but not others? "What difference do the minutiae / of that seeming inconsequence that's called beauty / add up to?" It seems to Clampitt that some beauty-diffusing impulse in the universe itself is in question, an impulse that strews the earth with all the evolutionary varieties of pansy enumerated in the poem:

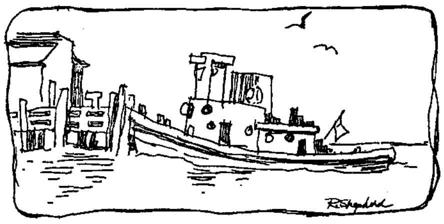
. . . a gathering, a proliferation

on a scale that, for all its unobtrusiveness, seems to be
worldwide, of what I don't know how to read except as an
urge to give pleasure . . .

I know I'm leaving something out
when I write of this omnipresence of something like eagerness,

this gushing insouciance that appears at the same time capable
of an all but infinite particularity.

Clampitt admires Hopkinsian inscape without seeking (as Hopkins often did) the best sunset, the most striking cloudscape, the most boisterous weather. Her poetry crosses Hopkinsian "gush" ("He gushes, but he means it," a schoolmate of Hopkins said) with a Wordsworthian appreciation of the common and the unobtrusive: the field pansy is a cousin of the "violet by a mossy stone, / Half hidden from the eye."



In her Maine poems Clampitt notices the recrudescent mosses and sundews, everyday plants, as a stay against decay, and admires, in "High Noon," an elderly woman who is still bestowing, however faded herself, unfaded flowers on the young. The poem ends by reflecting on a photograph of the elderly woman in her youth:

When the sun
leaves the zenith (if it ever does) of that
monochrome, it will utter its frivolous last
gasp in a smother of roses.

"Frivolous," perhaps, to those who do not understand a death accompanied by roses rather than by prayers, but a sentiment not unknown to Ronsard, watering a rose tree on a young girl's grave, "*Afin que vif et mort ton corps ne soit que roses.*"

Violets and roses are the luxuriant, bright side of Clampitt's imagination, pressing back against the inhumanity of the social order. (Clampitt's father was a Quaker, and her first book included a poem in memory of a self-immolated Quaker martyr protesting the war in Vietnam.) In "Westward," the symbol of social disorder is not war but the modern city. Clampitt's indictment of New York includes herself among the (relatively helpless) authors of "the general malfeasance." Here is the Dantesque description of "half-stupefied Manhattan" from the sinister opening of the long poem "The Prairie":

The wind whines in the elevator shaft. The houseless
squinny at us, mumbling. We walk attuned
to the colubrine rustle of a proletariat

that owes nobody anything, through a Manhattan
otherwise (George Eliot's phrase) well wadded
in stupidity—a warren of unruth, a propped

vacuity: our every pittance under lock and key
a party to the general malfeasance. Saurian,
steam-wreathed rancors crowd the manholes,

as though somebody grappled with the city's
entrails: Laocoön, doomsayer, by a god
or gods undone.

From that beginning in New York City, her own milieu, Clampitt traces, in a long and complicated arc, the parallel stories of her grandfather and Anton Chekhov, born in the same year. Chekhov wrote that the steppe cried out for a bard; Clampitt feels—in spite of her early escape to New York—the obligation to commemorate the prairie past that formed her sense of life. The flight of the poet from the "settled life" of the Midwest community takes place late in the poem, almost anonymously, in a reprise of the opening:

Dreams of escape: out of the settled life's
fencerow patrols, into their licensed overthrow:

excess, androgyny, the left wing; anonymity-
celebrity: escape achieved that's no escape,
the waiting misstep, the glassy fjord-leap.

Living anxious. The wind a suicidal howling
in the elevator shaft. The manholes' stinking,
steaming entrails. Dreams, now and again,

lopsided fantasies of going back, weak-kneed,
through the underbrush, and getting even.

Such brief selections from a lengthy poem give only a glimpse of Clampitt's rhythmic adroitness as she mimics the jump-starts and cowerings of the mind. In the end, she pursues the family line back to a house, dimly remembered from a snapshot, of a great-aunt in Pasadena: "The number / not quite right, the tenant an old / deaf Mexican who did not understand." The evanescence of personal history is palpable as the poem closes with the descendant of the homesteader unable to communicate with the Hispanic immigrant. This is a place where the American landscape—ever-changing under the soles of its westward-moving population—cannot give solace. Its failure to provide aesthetic reassurance is coupled with its failure to provide an enduring home for anyone.

Like landscape, femaleness has for Clampitt its disappointments; whatever the ultimate rewards to the contemporary woman artist, she and her avatars—Dorothy Wordsworth, Emily

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Imaginary Homelands
ESSAYS AND CRITICISM 1981-1991

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Dickinson—were unsuccessful girls, judged by the common standards of their societies. In "My Cousin Muriel," a cousin of the speaker is dying in California, and old memories arise while death, unspeakable, "stirs like a stone":

> The air of rural Protestant New England
>
> . . . infused the hinterland
> my cousin Muriel and I both hailed from:
> a farmhouse childhood, kerosene-lit,
> tatting-and-mahogany genteel. "You
> were the smart one," she'd later say. . . .
>
> [She played] the whole trajectory of
> being female, while I played the dullard,
> presaged. She bloomed, knew how to flirt,
> acquired admirers. I didn't.

Clampitt has faced the question of being female before, mercilessly, in her elegy for her mother, "Procession at Candlemas"; here she confronts, in the frightening and frightened poem "A Hedge of Rubber Trees," what she herself might have become, uprooted in New York—a sodden recluse. She recounts her temporary alliance with a displaced eccentric:

> Unclassifiable castoffs, misfits, marginal cases:
> when you're one yourself, or close to it, there's
> a reassurance in proving you haven't quite gone
> under by taking up with somebody odder than you are.

Finally, the acquaintance with the elder eccentric founders. The poet does not excuse her own part in the separation:

> The West Village was changing. I was changing. The last
> time I asked her to dinner, she didn't show. Hours—
> or was it days?—later, she phoned to explain: she hadn't
> been able to find my block; a patrolman had steered her home.
> I spent my evenings canvassing for Gene McCarthy. Passing,
> I'd see her shades drawn, no light behind the rubber trees.
> She wasn't out, she didn't own a TV. She was in there,
> getting gently blotto. What came next, I wasn't brave
> enough to want to know.

Earlier, the recluse had dreamed that her own face in the mirror was "covered over . . . with gray veils." The lethal effacement of the spinster by society, partly because of her inability or refusal to compromise, partly because of the revulsion felt by the sexual for the asexual, is a theme not much treated in poetry. It is there in Clampitt, but unsentimentally; the recluse speaks of her cohort of roaches, "ruefully, as of an affliction that / might once, long ago, have been prevented." Landscape and "beauty" and "art," and even church (where the speaker and the recluse met), are powerless to cope with the disintegrative force of the city.

If, then, Clampitt's imagination [illegible] its most stringent cannot rest in landscape (whatever its exaltations), or in solidarity with women, or in institutional remedies, or in art, where will it find an anchor? The title poem of "Westward," in partial answer, takes Clampitt to the island of Iona, off the western coast of Scotland. She goes there partly because Keats went there, partly because Lycidas drowned in the Irish Sea, partly because St. Columba "made his pious landfall" there, partly because it is "the raw edge of Europe." On Iona, "the prospect / is to the west." At the same time, "the retrospect / is once again toward the interior." Facing both ways, back to Europe and forward to the New World, Clampitt imagines the dogged wanderings of what one can only call the Western religious imagination, guarding something that will be of use and solace to everyone (as art is not, as sexual identity is not, as even the beauty of the earth is not). Clampitt does not know where to locate the current home of the religious impulse, but she recalls its past, the trail of "the mind's / resistance to the omnipresence of what / moves but has no, cannot say its name." Naming and the religious impulse are for Clampitt (if I understand her correctly) the same. Carrying the Word has led, in the West, to all the "embarkations, landings, dooms, conquests, / missionary journeys, memorials" of human endeavor. "Westward" ends with a brilliantly entropic summary of those Christian journeyings from the Holy Land to Europe and on to the New World:

> Columba
> in the skin-covered wicker of that coracle,
>
> lofting these stonily decrepit preaching
> posts above the heathen purple; in their
> chiseled gnarls, dimmed by the weatherings
>
> of a millennium and more, the braided syntax
> of a zeal ignited somewhere to the east,
> concealed in hovels, quarreled over,

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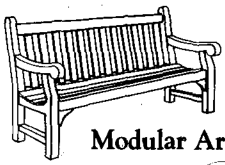

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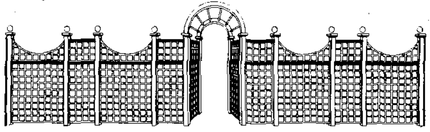

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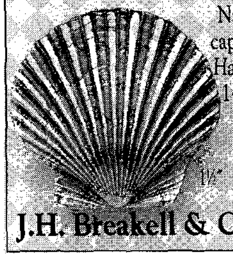

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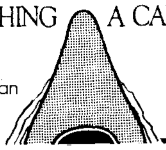

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some tenet, some common intimation for

all flesh, to hold on somehow till
the last millennium: as though the routes,
the ribbonings and redoublings, the

attenuations, spent supply lines, frayed-
out gradual of the retreat from empire, all
its castaways, might still bear witness.

This Protestant witnessing to the Word is an old theme in American literature, but its belatedness (to use Harold Bloom's word) in "Westward" suggests that its frailty belies its reassurances. Nonetheless, Clampitt insists that the saving Word has to be one available to all, not solely to readers of literature or people of one nationality.

Clampitt's formality in her prophetic moments, such as this one, means that her religious moments are estranged somewhat from the lines that speak of roaches and "getting gently blotto" and also from her botanizing lines. She is unwilling to give up on landscape or on the day-to-day (the deathbed journeys, the waits in clinics, the bus rides). Yet, above nature and above the quotidian, her imagination stubbornly aspires to something she cannot locate socially or institutionally, or even aesthetically. This "bearing witness" can be compromised or attenuated by circumstance, but it nonetheless stands all alone, "hugely politic" (Shakespeare's phrase). Clampitt, while recognizing the same tyrannies and historical corruptions in the pursuit of the absolute which so dismay Bidart, preserves a sense of the undamaged conscience reborn among human beings. It is for her a bulwark against the ultimate insufficiency of beauty and history alike. And though the power of her faith in that inner light is unmistakable, she does not always convince this reader of the reliability of a universal Word, reinvented by every culture.

In each of these poets there appears the documentary and autobiographical base that is natural to lyric. Bidart had a mother, and Goldbarth a father, and Clampitt a Cousin Muriel, no doubt; and the "Golden State" (Bidart), and New York and Texas (Goldbarth), and Maine (Clampitt) are all on the real map; and Augustine and the Empress Koken and Dorothy Wordsworth are all retrievable in the libraries. But the fierce torments of "The First Hour of the Night" and the luxuriant defenses of "Popular Culture" and the universal beneficence of natural beauty in "The Field Pansy"—these, as Stevens would say, "had to be imagined . . . / Required, as a necessity requires." Doubt, death, and corruption always threaten the stability of the imagination, which presses back in multiple forms. In these poets the American verse line seems to be getting longer, spreading out even to the margin, as if the imaginative counter-pressure against entropy had to be as strong and as broad as possible. This proliferation of language is the reverse of the gnomic Word of religion: "I am who am"; "I am the way"; "My God, My King" (Herbert); "Yea, beds for all who come" (C. Rossetti); "Yonder" (Hopkins). The "embellishments" of art and the plainness of the saving efficacious Word have always stood in an oblique and perplexed relation to each other. Each of these poets, representing the nostalgic afterglow of our three major religions (Catholic in Bidart, Jewish in Goldbarth, Protestant in Clampitt), declines to forgo the seductions of the absolute. Whether this position of the imagination can be authentically maintained, even if it is widely shared, remains in question.

—Helen Vendler

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

Object Lessons, by Anna Quindlen (Random House; $19). A short first novel—which contains all the elements of a big, sprawling novel—about a big, sprawling Irish-Catholic family in Westchester during the sixties. Ostensibly a coming-of-age story, it's really about how families work, as observed principally by Maggie, the thirteen-year-old granddaughter of John Scanlan, a rich, powerful, handsome, destructive, charming, bigoted Irishman, to whom most of the family is in thrall. There is a resistance group of two: Maggie's father, Tommy, who is quietly bent on not becoming "one of John Scanlan's boys," and her gutsy mother, Connie. But then Connie is, as her father-in-law puts it, a "guinea." Maggie doesn't miss much; without keeping her eye glued to the keyhole, she manages to witness

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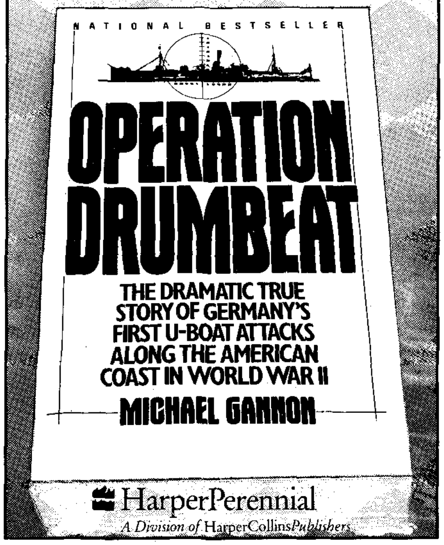
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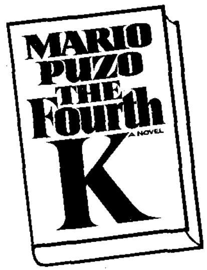

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a number of crucial events not intended for her eyes or ears. Her observations on grownup matters are sometimes articulate beyond her years, but the reporting is sharp—the details of time and place are evocative.

Strange Fits of Passion, by Anita Shreve (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; $18.95). This partly successful hybrid, a literary thriller, is unmoving at its most literary, but at its most thrilling it *is* thrilling, and finely written. The literary manifests itself in the author's attempt to justify the book's shocking material by setting it in a frame: a meeting between an investigative reporter and the now grown daughter of a battered woman about whom the reporter wrote a best-selling exposé. Out of guilt and a desire to do the daughter some kind of justice, the reporter visits her in her college dorm room and gives her the collection of transcripts used in preparing the sensational book about her parents, whom she never really knew, since one was dead and the other serving a prison sentence during her childhood. The scene between the girl and the reporter is almost unbearably clumsy, so it is a relief to get to the transcripts, which consist largely of her mother's own notes about her marriage to a glamorous but drunk and violent man, her adoption of a fake identity and escape to a small Maine town, her return to well-being through a love affair with a firm-hearted local fisherman, and the twists that led to a murder. This may sound like melodramatic stuff, but Ms. Shreve renders the beleaguered woman's voice, and the voices of other townspeople, with the arresting clarity we ask of all good writing.

GENERAL

The Birth of the Modern: World Society, 1815-1830, by Paul Johnson (HarperCollins; $35). Although some of the machinery of the Industrial Revolution was already in place in the eighteenth century, the author believes that the transformations we associate with modern times didn't really begin until after the Napoleonic Wars. The fifteen years he chronicles were turbulent, but none of the upheavals—including the depressions and financial panics that were replacing such earlier scourges as famines—interrupted the development of science, the application of technology, the enhancement of communications, and the increasing respect that even authoritarian governments paid to public opinion. Mr. Johnson's thousand-odd pages focus on Great Britain, the world's pacesetter and paramount power, yet he doesn't seem to neglect any quarter of the globe as he surveys mankind from China, whose archaic government grew steadily more ineffective, to Peru, where the benefits of independence from Spain had not yet manifested themselves. His style is lively and entertaining, and he writes with special relish about the era's great temperaments—Beethoven for one, Andrew Jackson for another.

Inside the KGB: My Life in Soviet Espionage, by Vladimir Kuzichkin, translated from the Russian by Thomas B. Beattie (Pantheon; $25). These memoirs of a defector are persuasive, because they are modest: Mr. Kuzichkin never claims to know more than he does or generalizes about matters of which he lacks firsthand experience. Born in 1947, he came of age and went to work in the Brezhnev era, a time of corruption at the top and apathy or cynicism elsewhere. His training was meticulous, though, and aficionados of spy literature can learn the craft as Soviets learn it. A Farsi-speaking Iranian specialist, the author worked out of the Embassy in Tehran in the years when the Shah's regime, unsympathetic to Russia, was protected by an alert SAVAK. Although Mr. Kuzichkin suspected that the Shah might not last forever, he couldn't convince his bosses of that, with the result that the Russians, like everyone else, were baffled and helpless in the face of the Iranian revolution. He defected and left Iran in 1982, but not before discovering that the Shah's SAVAK had gone on to work for Ayatollah Khomeini.

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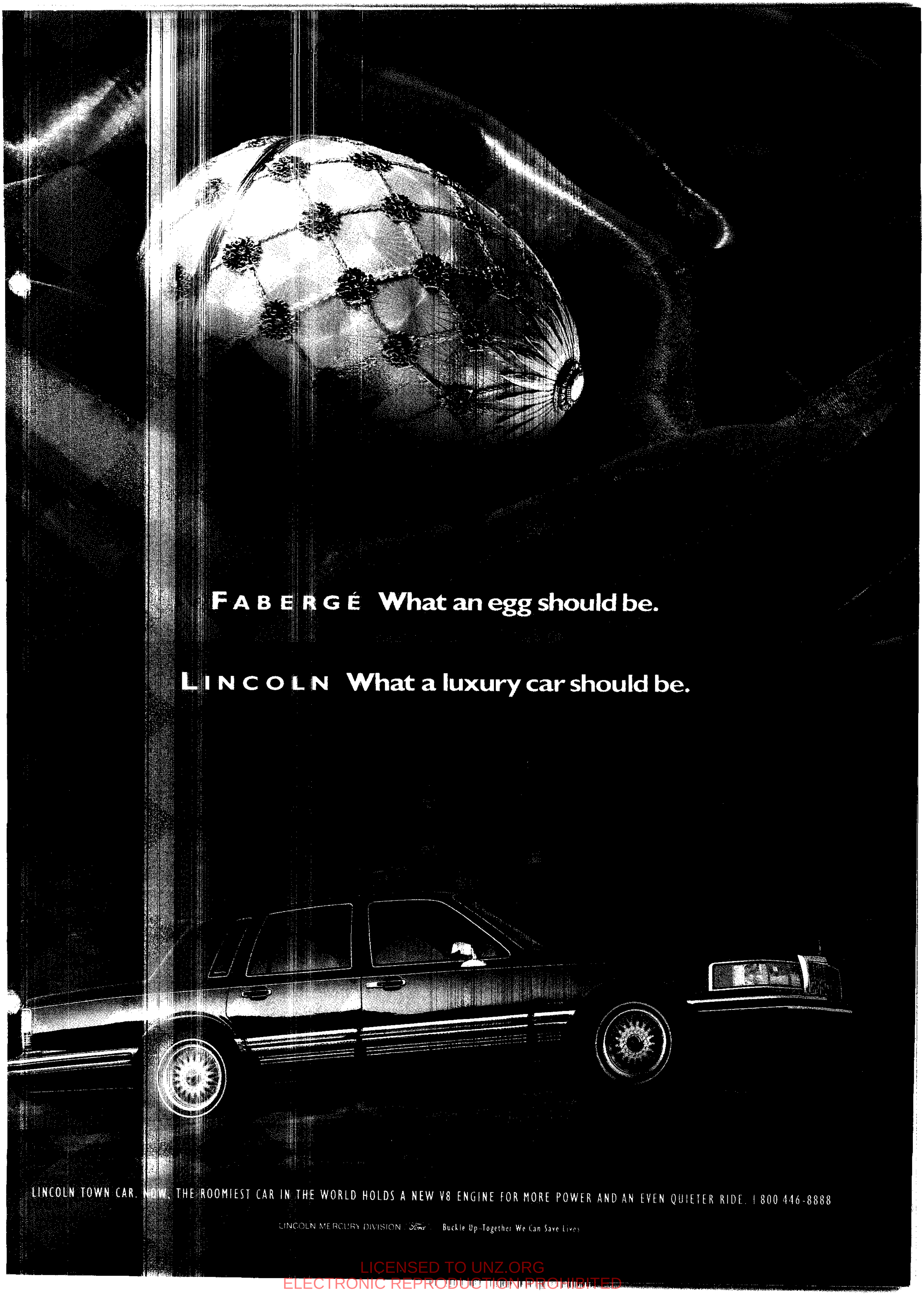

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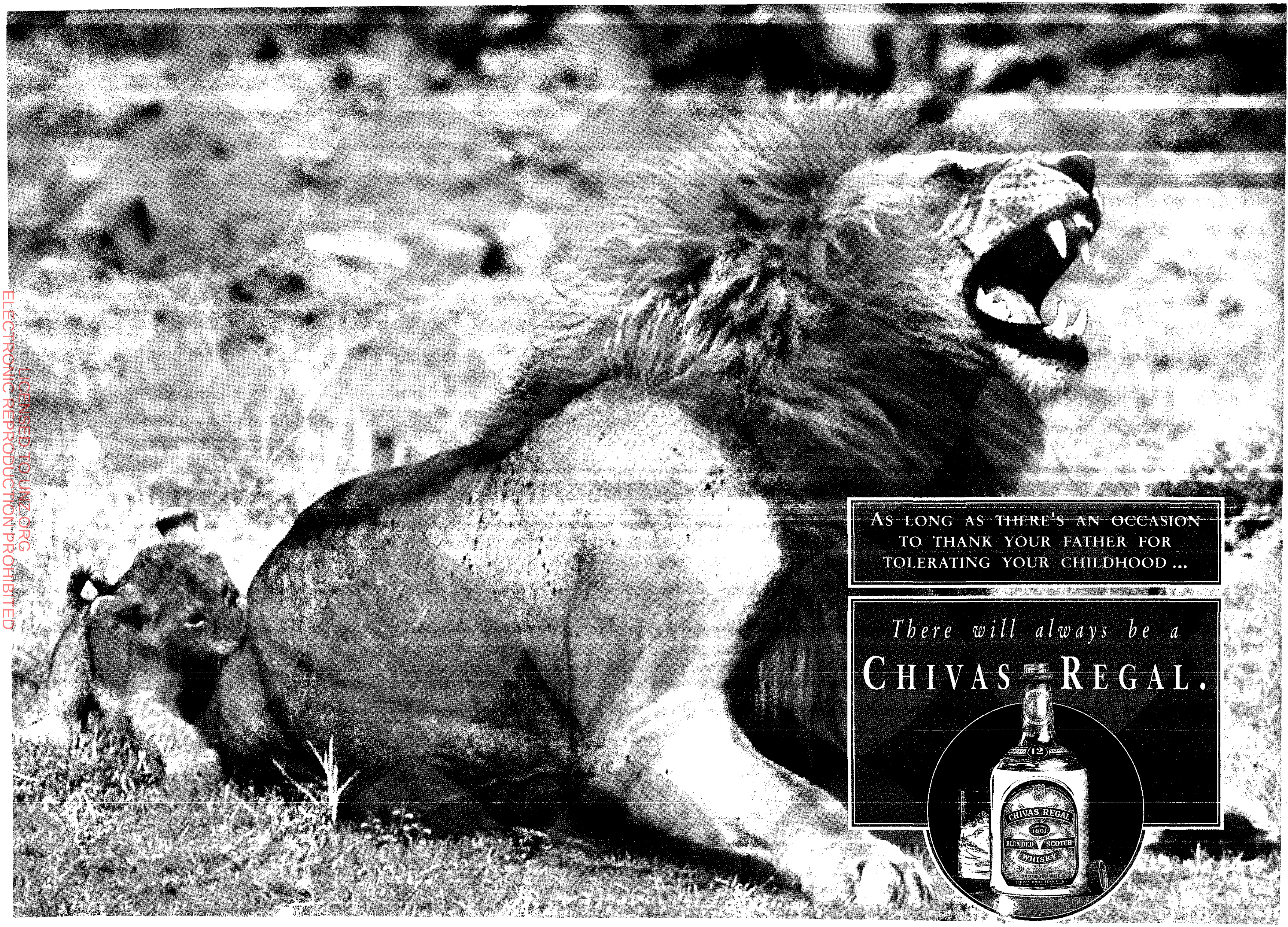
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